



ESHEC

ESWATINI HIGHER
EDUCATION COUNCIL

Ensuring relevance & excellence

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

2024 - 2025

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THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE



**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
AND TRAINING
HONOURABLE OWEN NXUMALO**

Councillor Phiwayinkhosi Ginindza



CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

It is with great honour that I present the 2024–2025 Annual Performance Report of the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC). This reporting year has been marked by significant progress, strategic partnerships, and a renewed commitment to advancing the quality and relevance of higher education in Eswatini.

I wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank the outgoing Council, whose term concluded in August 2024. Their invaluable contributions have shaped a resilient and visionary foundation for the Council's work. To my fellow members of the newly constituted Council, I extend my appreciation for your passion and dedication to this vital national mandate.

During this year, ESHEC achieved several milestones. Notably, we reviewed and registered five institutions that now fully comply with national higher education legislation—an indication of the sector's growing maturity and accountability. Our focus on strategic collaboration was evident through partnerships such as the MoU with the Ministry of Labour and Public Service to harmonize skills development, and an MoU with the Lesotho Council on Higher Education to foster regional cooperation. Additionally, ESHEC became a member of Business Eswatini, emphasizing our commitment to

aligning higher education with economic needs. We also continued our partnership with the Taiwan Technical Mission to promote skills development and innovation.

Internally, the Council undertook critical reviews of our regulatory frameworks—including the Guidelines for Institutions and Programmes, as well as the institutional registration and accreditation processes. These efforts aim to enhance transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness, thereby strengthening public trust and institutional credibility.

As we reflect on these achievements, we do so with gratitude to all stakeholders—government ministries, development partners, regulatory bodies, employers, institutions, students, and the public. Your ongoing support and collaboration are vital as we work towards a higher education system that is innovative, inclusive, and future-oriented.

Together, we are laying the groundwork for a sector that not only meets current skills demands but also anticipates future needs. ESHEC remains committed to ensuring higher education catalyzes national development, innovation, and equity.

Phiwayinkhosi Ginindza
Chairperson of the Council
Eswatini Higher Education Council

Dr Loretta N. Mkhonta CEO, Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC)



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REMARKS

It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I present the 2024–2025 Annual Performance Report of ESHEC. This year has been both eventful and progressive, reflecting our unwavering commitment to building a credible, responsive, and high-quality higher education system aligned with Eswatini's socio-economic development goals.

A significant achievement has been the notable increase in fully registered higher education institutions, many transitioning from provisional status after meeting regulatory standards. This progress highlights our collective efforts to elevate institutional compliance and maturity. Additionally, accredited programmes aligned with national priorities have increased, with institutions demonstrating about 70% progress in implementing development plans to meet accreditation standards.

Support for technical and vocational education was strengthened through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, ensuring quality assurance and enhancing skills development crucial for national growth. The completion of the National Skills Anticipation Study provided vital projections up to 2033 and 2056, guiding national planning and ensuring responsiveness to future labour market needs.

Our stakeholder engagement deepened through formal partnerships with industry via Business Eswatini and regional collaboration with the Lesotho Council on Higher Education. A notable milestone was hosting the

Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education's Director of Quality Assurance, resulting in key reforms and positioning ESHEC to produce an Annual State of Higher Education Report and launch a Quality Assurance Journal.

We also advanced as an information hub for higher education, completing the Skills Anticipation Study and benchmarking with Seychelles to develop the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS), which will integrate with the Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS) for seamless data flow. Looking ahead, we are set to launch the ESHEC/UN Research Forum to strengthen higher education's role in sustainable development through research.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Some institutions with lapsed provisional registration have delayed documentation submissions, and we are actively supporting them to achieve full compliance. Internal studies on contract cheating, plagiarism, and the impact of unaccredited programmes have provided critical insights, informing policies to uphold academic integrity.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all stakeholders—government, institutions, students, industry, regional bodies, and the public. Your continued collaboration is vital as we strive to deliver excellence, relevance, and opportunity in Eswatini's higher education system. Together, we will continue to build a brighter future.

Dr Loretta N. Mkhonta
CEO, Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC)

1.BACKGROUND

ESHEC operates as a parastatal entity, established under the Higher Education Act of 2013. This legal framework sets the stage for ESHEC's operations and defines its core responsibilities (Higher Education Act of 2013). The Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) underscores the quality assurance functions of ESHEC (ESQF, 2020). The Public Enterprise Unit. (PEU) Circular of 2017 confirmed the parastatal status of the ESHEC.

The Definition of Higher Education: The Higher Education Act of 2013 defines higher education as “all learning programmes that commence after secondary schooling”, and higher education institutions as “any institution which provides higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance education” and secondary education as “post O-level or A-level.”

1.1. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Eswatini

In the year 2024/2025, Eswatini was home to a total of 42 Higher Education Institutions. Of these, ten (10) are public institutions, while 32 are privately owned. Additionally, there are eleven (11) TVET institutions, comprising both public and private entities. Student enrollment across these institutions amounted to 21,726 students, with 13,662 enrolled in public higher education institutions and 8,064 in private institutions.

1.1.STAFF COMPLEMENT



Dr Loretta Mkhonta
The Chief Executive Officer



Dr Ncamsile D. Motsa
The Research, Monitoring
and Publications Manager



Mr Mpendulo Nyamane
Finance and
Administration Manager



Dr Monica Nkwanyana
The Quality Assurance
Manager



Dr Emmanuel Howe
The Senior Quality
Assurance Officer



Dr Siphiwayinkosi Nsibande
Quality Assurance Officer



Ms Batfobile Dlamini
Quality Assurance Officer



Mr Musawenkosi Zwane
Quality Assurance Officer



Mr Mihla Khumalo
Advocacy and
Communications Officer



Mr Nhlanhla Sigwane
IT Officer



Mr Thembinkosi Mkhabela
Transport and
Logistics Officer



Ms Tanele Dlamini
Admin and PA
to the CEO

1.1. Corporate Statements

The following vision, mission, and values align with the desired work ethic and demands from ESHEC's mandate, which is entrenched in leadership, staff, and as a philosophy on which decisions are based.

PURPOSE

We regulate and coordinate higher education to ensure that institutions produce programmes that are responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country.

INTENT

Globally comparative higher education institutions (HEIS) and programmes.

VALUES

• Professionalism	ESHEC is committed to upholding and maintaining high standards of proficiency when providing services to the nation.
• Integrity	We strive for honesty, fairness, and objectivity in all our dealings with HEIs and other stakeholders.
• Partnerships	We value the collective wisdom that emerges from sustainable and beneficial partnerships with public and private organisations.
• Accountability	We transparently work towards clear objectives and accept responsibility for our decisions and actions.
• Responsiveness	We will provide frank, impartial, and timely feedback to the government, stakeholders, and partnerships.

1.2. ESHEC's Mandate

ESHEC has a comprehensive mandate under the Higher Education Act of 2013 to oversee various facets of higher education in Eswatini. Its responsibilities include the following:

1.2.1. Quality Assurance

ESHEC is the custodian of quality in higher education. It is tasked with developing and implementing a quality assurance framework that governs universities, colleges, and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.

1.2.2. Registration of Providers

Registration of providers is another core function of ESHEC. ESHEC registers higher education institutions (HEIs) based on a set of criteria that ensure HEIs meet the requisite standards. This process is crucial for maintaining the integrity and quality of higher education in Eswatini (Higher Education Act of 2013).

1.2.3. Policy Advisory Role

ESHEC also serves as an advisory body to the Minister of Education and Training. The Council provides expert advice on various matters related to higher education, thereby influencing policy decisions (Higher Education Act of 2013).

1.2.4. Coordination of long-term Planning and Overall Development of Higher Education

The Higher Education Act of 2013 places the Council in a pivotal role for shaping the educational landscape in Eswatini. ESHEC is expected to liaise with various stakeholders, including educational institutions and sectors of the economy, to ensure that higher education is aligned with national development goals and human resource requirements.

1.2.5. Resource Vetting

One of the less highlighted but crucial roles of ESHEC is resource vetting. The council is responsible for scrutinising and approving resources for funding higher education. ESHEC plays a pivotal role in the financial planning and oversight of public higher education institutions in Eswatini, ensuring that they are adequately funded and financially sustainable.

1.2.6. Programme Admissibility

ESHEC has the authority to determine the admissibility of Higher Education study programmes, in other words, the accreditation of learning programmes. This involves a rigorous evaluation process to ensure that the programmes meet the set criteria and standards. The Higher Education Act (2013) states that ESHEC shall be responsible for the accreditation, promotion, coordination, and determination of higher education, the maintenance of standards of teaching, examination, and research in higher education institutions (Subsection 5 [1]).

1.3. Theory of Change in the Higher Education Act

The theory of change embedded in the Higher Education Act of 2013 aims to elevate the quality, accountability, and transparency of higher education institutions in Eswatini. The Act serves as the legislative framework, setting forth activities such as accreditation, registration, and quality assurance. These activities are designed to produce outputs like a list of accredited institutions and performance metrics, leading to outcomes of improved educational standards and institutional accountability. Ultimately, the impact sought is a skilled workforce and increased public trust in the higher education system.

1.4. Regulatory Framework: Guidelines and Standards

In 2016, ESHEC developed an institutional framework to address the strategic goal of formalising quality assurance processes in higher education systems for consistency, comparability, and continuity. This is through regulations and standards as set out in the Higher Education (General) Regulations of 2016, published in Legal Notice 14 of 2016.

1.4.1.Regulations for Establishment – Outlines the requirements for establishing a higher education institution (HEI) or a qualification awarding institution. Establishment results in provisional authority to operate an HEI, which is valid for two years.

1.4.2.Regulations for Registration – Apply to a higher education institution that is already operating, especially under provisional authority. This includes an application for amendment to the initial provisional authority, such as a change of ownership. Under these regulations, the Council can close an institution if, after assessment for registration post-provisional stage, it still does not meet ESHEC standards. This results in full registration for five (5) years.

1.4.3.Regulations for Accreditation of Institutions and Programmes – These guide the accreditation of new and existing programmes proposed by HEIs and guide the accreditation of institutions.

1.4.4.Institutional Assessment Standards – These thirteen (13) standards are used to evaluate HEIs for accreditation.

1.4.5.Programme Evaluation Standards – These eleven (11) standards are used to evaluate programmes proposed by HEIs for accreditation.



2. GOVERNANCE

2.1. Council Subcommittees

The Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) currently has three subcommittees, namely: the Academic Planning and Development Committee (APDC), the Finance Committee, and the Human Resources Committee. All the roles and responsibilities of the subcommittees are set out in the Board Charter of 2023. Before October 2024, there were two subcommittees, namely the APDC and the Finance Committee.

Registering higher education institutions and determining the admissibility of higher education study programmes involves a rigorous evaluation process. As dictated in the Higher Education Act of 2013, assessment reports are submitted to the Academic Planning and Development Committee (APDC), a subcommittee of the Board. The reports then go to the Council for approval.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, ESHEC Council Sub Committees and Council held scheduled as well as special meetings in the reporting period due to the nature of ESHEC's work and mandate, and the fact that there are instances when institutional and programme assessment reports cannot wait for the scheduled quarterly board meetings, resulting in special meetings.

ESHEC COUNCIL

2.2. Appointment of the new ESHEC Council in October 2024

In the reporting period, the term of office for the Council came to an end at the end of August 2024. On October 9, 2024, the Minister of Education and Training appointed 11 members to the ESHEC Board for a three-year term, according to Article 6 (1) of the Higher Education Act (2013). These are:



**Councillor
Phiwayinkhosi Ginindza**
Chairperson of the Council



Councillor Fairlie Mabuza
Chairperson of the
Finance Committee



Councillor Dr Ntombilenhle Dlamini
Chairperson of the Academic
Planning and Development Committee



Councillor Sifisosethu Bhembe
Chairperson of the Human
Resources Committee



**Councillor
Mboni Dlamini**



**Councillor
Hlobisile Ndzimandze**



**Councillor
Talekile Dlamini**



**Councillor
Dr Faith Mlotsa
-Mngometulu**



**Councillor
Dr Oliver Museka**



**Councillor
Celiwe Khumalo**



**Councillor
Nondumiso Shongwe**

2.2.1. Board Induction and Corporate Governance Training

On October 28-29, 2024, ESHEC conducted a Board Induction and Governance Training at Royal Villas for the incoming Council, focusing on legislative frameworks, strategic operations, and public enterprise expectations. The workshop was officially opened by the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Additionally, on November 4, 2024, REDI Consulting provided specialized corporate governance training to Council members at the same venue, covering risk management and public sector governance requirements. These sessions collectively equipped the Board with essential governance knowledge and operational insights.

2.3. Board meetings

In the financial year, the Council had the following meetings

Council	Number of Meetings
Ordinary Council	4
APDC	10
Special Council	4
Finance	5
Board orientation	1
HR Committee	3

2.4. Appointment of Alternate Members of the Academic Planning and Development Committee in April 2024

Following its transition to a parastatal in 2022, ESHEC has been addressing a significant backlog of institutional and programme assessments inherited from its predecessor body. By April 2024, 21 reports awaited review. To resolve this, ESHEC secured approval to appoint alternate APDC members and hold special meetings. This strategy proved successful, resulting in two special meetings in June 2024 that reviewed 20 programmes from the University of Eswatini and 24 institutional reports for Springfield Research University, significantly clearing the backlog.

2.5. Approved Policies

Policy	Approval Status
Cybersecurity Policy	Approved
Motor Vehicle Policy	Approved



ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Wellness Initiatives

During the 2024/2025 financial year, ESHEC implemented a range of wellness initiatives aimed at enhancing employee morale, promoting better health outcomes, and improving overall productivity. These initiatives formed part of the Council's commitment to fostering a supportive and healthy work environment.

Wellness Initiative	Comments
Leadership Growth Forum Report	All ESHEC staff attended
Gym and Swimming	Membership fees were paid monthly, except during the last quarter of the financial year due to financial constraints.
Medical Aid Contributions	Contributions were made consistently monthly throughout the financial year.
Financial Literacy Sessions	Three sessions were conducted during the year, with presentations facilitated by Old Mutual, Liberty, Stanlib, and Lubane Financial Services.
Wellness Symposium	Three staff members attended a wellness symposium as part of ongoing professional and personal development.
Cancer Awareness Walk	Eight employees participated in a cancer awareness walk held during Cancer Awareness Month, promoting health consciousness among staff.
Team-Building Retreat	A team-building retreat was successfully held at Jozini Tiger Lodge in KwaZulu-Natal to strengthen team cohesion and workplace collaboration.

3.2. Staff Capacity Building and Benchmarking Conducted

3.2.1. Artificial Intelligence Training Report – 11 June 2024

On 11 June 2024, ESHEC hosted a training session on Artificial Intelligence (AI) as part of its digital transformation efforts. The session was facilitated by Professor Sandile Motsa from UNESWA and held at the ESHEC conference room. Attendees included ESHEC staff and compliance consultants. The training focused on building foundational AI knowledge to help participants understand and utilize AI tools in their roles, with an emphasis on how AI can enhance productivity, streamline processes, and support innovation. This initiative is part of ESHEC's broader strategy to incorporate technology into its operations.

3.2.2. Benchmarking Visit Report – Seychelles (15 November 2024)

On 15 November 2024, two employees from the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC), the Research, Monitoring and Publications Manager and the Information Technology Officer, undertook a benchmarking visit to Seychelles.

The primary objective of the visit was to support the implementation of a Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) at ESHEC. As part of the visit, the delegates also participated in a workshop on micro-credentials, which provided valuable insights into emerging trends in higher education qualifications and digital learning pathways.

The benchmarking exercise was instrumental in enhancing the Council's capacity for efficient data management, aligning ESHEC with international best practices and technological innovations in higher education.

3.2.3. Seminar attended

On 27th September 2024, the Chief Executive Officer, the Finance and Administration Manager, and the Personnel and Administration Officer attended a seminar titled *"Championing Strategy Implementation through Human Resources"* held at Mantenga Country Lodge. The objective of the seminar was to enhance the capacity of HR practitioners and executive management by highlighting the critical role of Human Resources in effective strategy execution.

3.2.4. Commonwealth Consultative Meeting held in Johannesburg from 24 to 25 March 2025

From 24 to 25 March 2025, the ESHEC CEO attended a consultative meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, organized by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). The meeting focused on strategic developments in higher education, especially the role of micro-credentials in promoting lifelong learning, professional development, and workforce readiness. COL covered travel expenses, while ESHEC contributed half of the subsistence allowance. The CEO's participation aligns with ESHEC's Strategic Plan (2023–2026) and supports the national micro-credentials project in partnership with the Eswatini Qualifications Authority, aiming to address skills gaps and foster a future-ready higher education system.

3.2.5. Process Re-engineering

ESHEC undertook efforts to develop and formalize key human resources processes aimed at strengthening governance, fairness, and operational efficiency during the reporting period.

3.2.6. Recruitment and Selection Process

A comprehensive, transparent, and merit-based recruitment framework was established to guide the filling of vacant positions, aiming to eliminate bias, nepotism, and promote equal opportunity.

3.2.7. Onboarding Process

A formal onboarding process was introduced to help new employees integrate smoothly, providing them with job descriptions, necessary tools, institutional policies, and introductions to teams and workspaces.

3.2.8. Grievance Procedure and Grievance

A structured grievance mechanism was developed, including a standardized form, to facilitate respectful and accountable handling of employee concerns and complaints.

3.2.9. Security

ESHEC enhanced security by installing CCTV cameras, complementing previous biometric access controls, to strengthen overall security measures.

3.2.10. Fleet Management

The Council procured a sedan vehicle, increasing its fleet to three, which improved staff mobility for official activities. There were no accidents, and routine maintenance was carried out on all vehicles.



4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) is responsible for developing and enforcing a comprehensive quality assurance framework in higher education. This framework covers registration, accreditation, institutional audits, quality promotion, and standards development. Based on international best practices and the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA), ESHEC ensures that institutions comply with the Higher Education Act of 2013 and the Higher Education (General) Regulations of 2016. ESHEC's quality assurance function also involves the creation and refinement of policies, assessment manuals, standard operating procedures, and subject-specific standards, as well as the design and validation of micro-credentials. Through these efforts, ESHEC fosters continuous improvement, relevance, and accountability within the higher education sector.

4.1. Quality Assurance Capacity Building Workshop – 1–2 November 2024

From 1 to 2 November 2024, ESHEC held a capacity-building workshop for Higher Education Institutions focused on programme development and the use of related templates. The event also served as internal training for the Quality Assurance team, providing detailed guidance on the Guideline for Programme Development to enhance their ability to design, review, and align academic programmes with national standards. Facilitated by Samuels Squared (Pty) Ltd, the workshop offered practical insights and hands-on exercises to improve the quality and consistency of programme submissions from both internal staff and HEI stakeholders.

4.2. Institutional assessments & registration

Thirteen (13) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) applied for registration and were assessed by the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC), in accordance with Section 15(1) of the Higher Education Act of 2013.

A total of eight (62%) institutions were granted full registration, indicating they met all prescribed criteria, including governance structures, academic policies, physical infrastructure, and financial viability. Four (31%) institutions granted provisional registration, which is valid for two years. Provisional registration is granted when an institution demonstrates potential to meet all requirements but needs more time to fully comply, typically regarding physical facilities, governance, or academic staffing. Provisional registration continues to serve as a developmental tool, providing institutions time and space to grow into full compliance.

4.3. Programme evaluation and accreditation

A total of seventy-five (75) academic programmes were evaluated for accreditation across 14 higher education institutions. A total of 46 (61%) programmes were granted accreditation, and 13 (17%) programmes were not accredited due to not meeting minimum standards and misalignment with national frameworks such as the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF) and the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) policy. About sixteen (16) programmes are pending final decisions or resubmissions.

4.3.1. Programme Accreditation

The accredited programmes were spread across eight identified fields of study, reflecting ESHEC's emphasis on a diverse and responsive higher education system.

Table 1 Programmes According to Field of Study

Field of Study	Number of Programmes	%
Education	11	28%
Business, Commerce and Administration	18	23%
Information and Communication Technologies	7	13%
Arts and Humanities	9	12%
Services	3	10%
Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Statistics	4	8%
Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction	3	3%
Health and Welfare	20	3%
Total	75	100

4.4. Subject Matter Expertise in Programme Assessments

The Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) conducts quality assurance assessments of institutions and their programmes before accreditation. ESHEC appoints external subject matter experts (SMEs) or a Review Panel in terms of Section 15 (2) of the Higher Education Act of 2013 to conduct these assessments using ESHEC's Programme Evaluation Standards and Guidelines.

ESHEC engaged a diverse and highly qualified group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from both local and regional institutions to conduct programme evaluations. This strategic mix of local knowledge, regional academic expertise, and professional or private sector experience ensures a comprehensive, context-specific, and quality-focused approach to assessing higher education programmes in Eswatini.

4.4.1. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

To ensure high standards and the efficiency of ESHEC's registration and accreditation processes, ESHEC engaged Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) with a diverse mix of academic and professional backgrounds.

CREDENTIALS	Percentage (%)
Doctoral Degrees (PhD, DPhil, EdD)	65%
Master's Degrees	30%
Bachelor's, Honours, or Postgraduate Degrees	5%

4.5. DESIGN AND REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS

Below is a summary of the tools developed or reviewed during the reporting period.

Table 2: Designed QA Frameworks and Tools

Framework or Tool	Purpose
Quality Assurance Manual	Provides detailed procedures for institutional and programme assessments, drawing on ASG-QA best practices.
Assessment and Reporting Tool	Standardises evaluations by Subject Matter Experts, ensuring consistency and reliability in assessment reports; will be adapted for institutional use.
Guidelines for the Establishment of Higher Education Institutions	Sets out requirements and procedures for establishing new higher education institutions in Eswatini.
Guidelines for Merging HEIs	Provides a framework for managing the process of institutional mergers to ensure continuity and quality.

4.6. Higher Education Institutions' Capacity Building

ESHEC conducted capacity-building workshops at Esibayeni Lodge to address common challenges in programme design, teaching strategies, and quality assurance across higher education institutions. Facilitated by Samuel Squared Consultancy, the sessions attracted over 200 participants from 50 institutions. The workshops focused on aligning curricula with industry needs and national goals, resulting in improved understanding of accreditation standards, enhanced collaboration, and the introduction of practical frameworks for institutional improvement.

4.6.1. Orientations of HEIs in readiness for assessments

To promote compliance and improve institutional readiness for accreditation, ESHEC conducted orientation sessions with several higher education institutions during the reporting period. These sessions aimed to familiarise institutions with ESHEC's assessment guidelines, programme evaluation frameworks, and institutional audit procedures. The orientations also supported institutions in developing self-evaluation reports and establishing effective internal quality assurance systems.

4.7. Collaboration with Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training (DIVT)

ESHEC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training (DIVT) to collaborate on improving the quality and industry relevance of vocational qualifications in Eswatini. The partnership will focus on joint curriculum development, monitoring of training providers, establishing expert advisory panels, aligning with regional standards, and mobilising resources to enhance the skilled labour force.

Following the MoU, DIVT developed a total of 25 vocational qualifications, with 13 already submitted to ESHEC. These programmes span six key vocational fields.

Table 3: TVET Accredited Programmes

Vocational Fields	Number of Unit Standards
Electrical	3
Boiler making	1
Motor Mechanics	3
Welding	3
HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration)	3
Total	13

4.8. National TVET Events, Collaborations and Activities

In 2024 and early 2025, ESHEC actively engaged in key national TVET events to promote skills development and raise sector visibility. In June 2024, they attended the Electrician Artisan Grade 3 Testing Graduation at Sebenta National Institute, celebrating vocational achievements. In February 2025, ESHEC participated in the inaugural Eswatini National Skills Competition, showcasing trainees' technical skills. These engagements reinforced ESHEC's commitment to quality vocational training and stakeholder collaboration. Additionally, in partnership with the Taiwan Technical Mission, ESEPARC, and under the NLMSP framework, ESHEC contributed to a national TVET Industry Needs Assessment Report to identify skills gaps and support strategic planning in the sector.

4.9. Quality Regional Collaboration

Table 4: Regional Collaborations

Partner Organisation	Purpose of Collaboration	Key Outcomes / Impact
Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN)	To contribute to the enhancement of regional higher education quality assurance by participating in capacity-building forums, leadership elections, and interregional initiatives such as the PoMISA Project focused on micro-credentials. Also, to access expert networks and emerging QA trends within SADC.	• Participated in the 6th General Assembly and leadership elections • Engaged in the PoMISA meeting (Mar 2025), gaining insights on regional micro-credential frameworks. • Tapped into the SAQAN SME database for expert recruitment. • Shared lessons from QA innovations across SADC.
African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN)	To strengthen quality assurance systems through continental collaboration, knowledge exchange, and access to a global database of Subject Matter Experts to support programme accreditation and institutional audits.	• Maintained full membership and participated in regional workshops. • Accessed a wider pool of Subject Matter Experts. • Contributed to and benefited from Africa-wide QA policy discussions and strategies.

Partner Organisation	Purpose of Collaboration	Key Outcomes / Impact
Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE)	To enhance ESHEC's internal QA capacity through technical support from Prof. Regis Chireshe in developing standards, audit manuals, assessment tools, and frameworks for Open and Distance e-Learning (ODEL) and micro-credentials, led by a regional expert.	- Revised QA manuals and standards. - Developed tools for institutional audits, registration, and accreditation. - Drafted ODeL and micro-credentials frameworks aligned with regional trends. Strengthened ESHEC's QA operational toolkit.
Council on Higher Education – Lesotho (CHE)	To establish a formal partnership to promote shared learning, benchmarking, staff development, and collaborative research between the two national QA bodies, enhancing institutional capacity and alignment.	- Hosted benchmarking visit. Exchanged insights on QA processes, qualifications frameworks, and institutional development. - Signed MoU to formalise partnership and support future cooperation, including staff exchanges and joint initiatives.
Commonwealth of Learning (COL)	To support evidence-based policy development on micro-credentials through benchmarking, stakeholder engagement, and data collection. The collaboration aims to align micro-credential strategies with national skills development priorities and labour market needs.	- Collaborated on a 10-week data collection process involving students, institutions, employers, and policymakers. - Participated in benchmarking missions to Seychelles and Namibia. - Strengthened ESHEC's policy development on micro-credentials. Promoted lifelong learning and workforce readiness.

4.10 Compliance Monitoring of Higher Education Institutions

During the reporting period, the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) intensified its monitoring of higher education institutions through six compliance consultants. The focus was on verifying the implementation of improvement plans from prior assessments and ensuring adherence to quality standards. These visits aimed to support institutions in operationalizing Council directives and strengthening their preparedness for accreditation processes.

Compliance Activities	Number of institutions
Compliance Monitoring	23
Improvement Plan Implementation Support	13



5. RESEARCH, MONITORING AND PUBLICATIONS

RESEARCH, MONITORING AND PUBLICATIONS

The Research, Monitoring and Publications Manager is responsible for conducting research and collating information on developments in higher education and publishing the information for the benefit of stakeholders. This report reports the significant accomplishments of the ESHEC Research Unit from April 2024 to March 2025, which were driven by the unit's six strategic goals.

From April 2024 to March 2025, the ESHEC Research, Monitoring, and Publications Unit made significant progress aligned with its six strategic goals.



5.1. Strategic Goal 1

The unit maintained engagement with international quality assurance trends, with the Research Manager attending the 4th ACQF Forum in Seychelles (November 2024) to explore the potential of micro-credentials for Eswatini. To inform future policy, market research is planned for Q1 2025, followed by stakeholder surveys in July 2025 to assess industry demand and perceptions.

5.2. Strategic Goal 2

In line with this goal, the unit published two research papers addressing academic dishonesty. The first, released in October 2024, examined plagiarism and academic integrity, revealing a gap between awareness and the actual use of detection tools, often hindered by financial and technical constraints.

The publication can be found on the ESHEC website: <https://eshec.org.sz/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/PLAGIARISM-AND-INTEGRITY-IN-HIGHER-EDUCATION-002.pdf>.

The second, published in March 2025, investigated contract cheating through a sector-wide perspective, emphasizing the importance of stronger policies, workshops, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to uphold academic standards. The publication can be found on the ESHEC website: <https://eshec.org.sz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNMASKING-CONTRACT-CHEATING-IN-ESWATINI-Number-5.pdf>.

The unit developed a Board Paper advocating for strict academic integrity regulations, scheduled for May 2025. This was informed by recent publications. Additionally, the unit engaged in capacity building by participating in a national monitoring and evaluation workshop and organising internal sessions on results-based management, HEMIS, and integrating SDGs into higher education.

Strategic Goal 3

The unit successfully gained endorsement from 41 institutions for the ESHEC/UN Academia Platform, which aims to integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into higher education. A technical committee was formed to develop the platform's terms of reference, with future efforts focused on refining the platform and establishing a sustainable model.

Strategic Goal 4

Data collection in 2024 revealed key challenges in the higher education sector, including low postgraduate enrolment and underrepresentation. To address this, a new Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) was piloted in December 2024, with full implementation planned for 2026/2027 to produce a comprehensive State of Higher Education report.

Strategic Goal 5

The unit identified critical skills gaps in key national sectors through the National Labour Market Skills Project. The resulting report, released in March 2025, recommends reviewing curricula, launching upskilling initiatives, and strengthening industry partnerships to align workforce development with market needs.

Strategic Goal 6

Activities focused on improving accreditation and institutional quality. A published manuscript and a study on foreign programme suspensions informed policy updates. A situational analysis revealed that many private institutions remain provisionally registered due to compliance and resource challenges, and highlighted a widespread lack of research capacity across higher education institutions, providing a basis for ongoing reforms.





6. **ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Advocacy and communication's role strategically engages with stakeholders on behalf of the Council and proactively provides information (mandate, activities, products and services) to the public for effective positioning of the Council's brand and image. The role is also responsible for overseeing the Council's public relations and serves public relations/media liaison person for the Council. In addition, the role is responsible for providing counsel to the CEO and Board on media crisis management. In the reporting period, the function facilitated the following initiatives:

6.1. Eswatini National Career EXPO

ESHEC collaborated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in the Eswatini National Career Expo 2024, which was launched at the Happy Valley Hotel on the 21st of June 2024. The regional events were held on the dates below.

Of the six regional events ESHEC participated in, the following: Shiselweni, Lubombo, Mankayane, Piggs Peak and Mbabane.

6.1.1. Outcomes of Eswatini Higher Education's Participation in the Eswatini Career Expo 2024:

- Strengthened partnerships between tertiary institutions and key stakeholders, fostering a collaborative environment for future initiatives.
- Led stakeholders to consult with ESHEC on program credibility, recruitment, and academic issues.
- Raised awareness about diverse educational and vocational training opportunities, reaching nearly 30,000 students across six events.
- Empowered youth by providing information on career options and vocational training, addressing youth unemployment.
- Promoted the importance of entrepreneurial skills for innovation and economic growth, encouraging entrepreneurship among students.
- Emphasized strategic career guidance to help students make informed decisions and secure sustainable employment.

6.2. Workshops for the Parliament portfolio Committees on Education and Training

On 5 and 8 August 2024, the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) hosted workshops for the Portfolio Committee Members from the House of Assembly and the House of Senate at the Hilton Hotel. The workshops provided an in-depth orientation on the Higher Education sector in Eswatini to parliamentarians from both Houses. Presentations and discussions were facilitated by ESHEC and the Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA).

6.2.1. Outcomes of the workshops

- Enhanced Collaboration: Strengthened relationships between ESHEC and the legislative bodies.
- Policy Alignment: discussions ensured that the Higher education regulatory frameworks are in line with national legislative priorities.
- Informed Decision-Making: Provided legislators with a deeper understanding of higher education challenges and needs.
- Resource Allocation: Facilitated discussions on the allocation of resources to higher education based on informed insights.
- Transparency and Accountability: Promoted transparency and accountability in the implementation of higher education policies.

- Capacity Building: Enhanced the capacity of legislators to advocate for and support higher education initiatives.
- Review of higher education legislation: During the workshop, legislators gained an appreciation of some gaps in higher education legislation.

6.3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

6.3.1 Strategic Partnership with Business Eswatini



In 2024, the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) formed a strategic partnership with Business Eswatini to strengthen collaboration between higher education institutions and the private sector. The partnership aims to align academic training with industry needs, enhance graduate employability, and support national economic growth through improved education-industry linkages.

6.3.2. ESHEC Participation in the second edition of the B2G breakfast meeting – 31st March 2025

ESHEC participated in the Second Edition of the Business-to-Government (B2G) Breakfast Meeting on 31st March 2025, facilitating dialogue between the private sector and government to strengthen collaboration and promote sustainable development. The meeting aimed to unlock strategic opportunities for joint action to accelerate economic growth and technological advancement in Eswatini.

6.4. Participation in the Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF): 30 August to 8 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) participated in the Eswatini International Trade Fair 2024, held at the Mavuso Trade Centre in Manzini from August 30th to September 8th, 2024. The event provided an excellent platform for ESHEC to engage with the public, promote accredited higher education institutions, and address various queries.

6.4.1. Awards and recognition

At the awards ceremony during the official closing of the EITF, ESHEC was awarded 3rd place in the Education and Information Services category. This recognition highlights the council's commitment to promoting quality higher education in Eswatini.

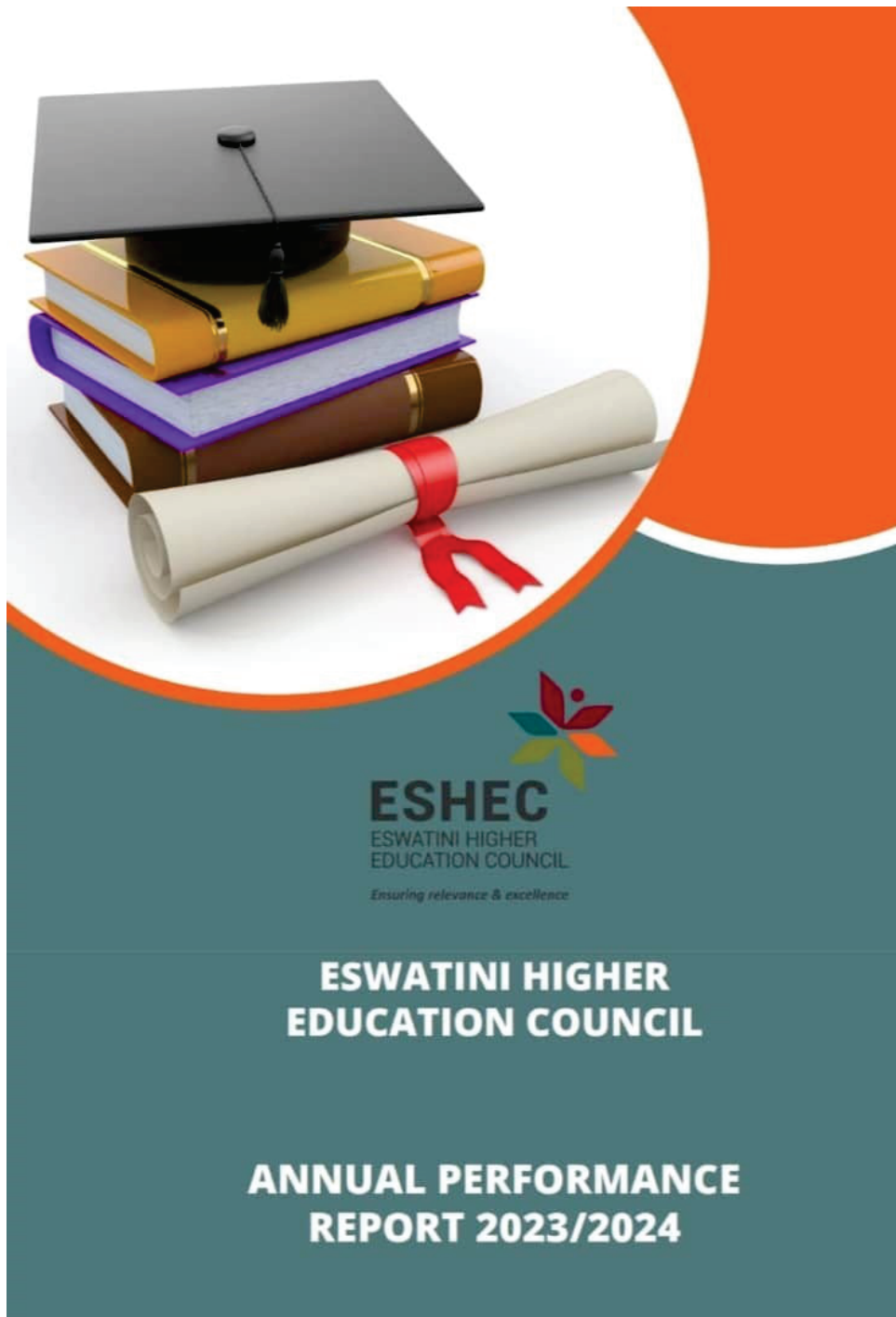


6.5. Publications

6.5.1. Bi-Annual Newsletters

In October 2024, ESHEC produced a combined newsletter for the 1st and 2nd quarters and 200 copies were printed for dissemination.

6.5.2. ESHEC annual report



The annual report was produced, and 200 copies were printed.

6.6. Higher Education and Industry Symposium

On November 20/21, 2024, ESHEC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training, held at The George Hotel, Manzini. The symposium had approximately 300 participants from industry and the Higher Education institutions attending over the two days. The first day of the Eswatini Higher Education Symposium featured candid and in-depth conversations between the higher education sector and industry, focusing on aligning educational programmes with industry needs.



6.7. ESHEC Social Media Engagement

ESHEC is active on the following social media platforms, Facebook, LinkedIn and X formerly Twitter.

6.7.1. Media Exposure

ESHEC featured across various news outlets including Times of Eswatini, Eswatini News, Times Sunday, Eswatini Financial News, Independent News, Inside Bizness, Eswatini Observer, Weekend Observer, and Sunday Observer. Coverage also appeared on Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services, Channel 1 and 2, UNESWA FM, Channel Yemaswati, and Eswatini TV (News, Tindzaba, Business View Programme).

6.7.2. Radio Campaigns

- ESHEC was featured multiple times on EBIS1, Letishisako, raising awareness on topics such as the importance of enrolling in registered institutions.
- Conducted a three-month sensitisation campaign with jingles aired during prime time on EBIS1 and 2, warning the public about bogus institutions and qualifications.

6.7.3. Media Impact & Engagement

- Strategic media coverage effectively highlighted ESHEC's initiatives and achievements, enhancing public understanding of its role.
- The Facebook engagement data indicated higher interaction in urban areas, with notable information gaps in rural towns like Siteki, Piggs Peak, Big Bend, and Mankayane.



7. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology function supports the mission and vision of the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) as defined by ESHEC leadership. Investments in information technology are driven principally by the desire to improve the way work is done by the organisation, decision-making, compliance with various laws, regulations, and policies, and risk management.

7.1. Strategic Milestones

7.1.1. Migration of the ESHEC Integration System

The migration of the ESHEC Integrated System from Mawema Consultancy to Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP) was successfully completed with ensured data integrity and security through encryption and restricted access. Despite challenges including server downtime and communication barriers, RSTP now operates as a secondary hosting platform. Post-migration compliance testing was conducted, and future transfers will incorporate enhanced security measures and improved stakeholder coordination.

7.1.2. Training of the Ministry of Education and Training's higher officials on AI.

On 14 November 2024, ESHEC organised a specialised AI training session for senior officials from the Ministry of Education and Training, led by Professor Motsa. The session focused on foundational AI knowledge, its applications in education, and ethical considerations, aiming to equip the Ministry's leadership with the skills needed to effectively guide AI integration into national policy and planning as part of the broader digital transformation efforts.

7.1.3. Survey on AI Utilisation in Higher Education Institutions

ESHEC conducted surveys to assess AI use in higher education institutions. Participation requests were sent, responses collected, and data analysed to produce a report. The report offers insights into AI adoption across institutions and will inform future strategies. Feedback was successfully shared with the institutions.

7.1.4. Data Controller and Data Processor Registration by HEI's

The ESHEC facilitated the registration of 45 higher education institutions with the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) to promote data governance and compliance. Currently, only 25 institutions have started registration, with 15 fully registered, while others face delays, incorrect category selection, or unpaid fees. ESHEC recommends clearer guidelines from ESCCOM, proactive follow-ups, and additional support to address challenges and streamline the registration process.

7.1.5. Cyber Security Policy

The Cybersecurity Policy was successfully developed and adopted, outlining measures for protecting information assets, including access control, data protection, threat mitigation, and incident response. Created through stakeholder engagement and risk assessments, it aligns with the 2022 Cybersecurity Act by ESCCOM. Its adoption strengthens the organisation's cybersecurity framework and ensures regulatory compliance.

7.1.6. Virtual Quality Assessment Assessments

ESHEC successfully conducted its first virtual programme assessment for UNESWA using Microsoft Teams, marking a transition from physical evaluations. While the ESHEC IT team provided essential support, the process faced challenges, including connectivity problems, video lag, limited user familiarity, and data security concerns. Recommendations include improving internet infrastructure, enhancing user training, strengthening security measures, and ensuring dedicated IT support to optimise future virtual assessments.

7.1.7. ESHEC Portal Refresher and Certificates

A refresher training session was conducted for four higher education institutions to enhance their proficiency in using the ESHEC portal for document uploads. Separately, customized certificates were produced for three institutions to formally recognize their specific accreditation achievements.

7.2. Operational Milestones

7.2.1. Technical Support for Higher Education Institutions

During the reporting period, the ESHEC IT office provided ongoing support to all registered institutions for the Integrated Registration and Accreditation System. This included resolving portal issues such as document upload errors, password resets, and technical problems like Error 500. All issues were successfully addressed, enabling every institution to complete their required document uploads.



8. CHALLENGES FOR ESHEC



CHALLENGES FOR ESHEC

8.1. Inconsistent Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Structures

A significant number of institutions either lacked fully functional IQA units or operated them without clear mandates, staff training, or institutional buy-in. This undermined systematic quality monitoring and continuous improvement processes.

8.2. Weak Execution of Improvement Plans

Many institutions submitted improvement plans that lacked specificity, measurable outcomes, and appropriate timelines. Supporting evidence was often insufficient or poorly aligned with the stated actions, limiting the effectiveness of planned interventions.

8.3. Gaps in Accreditation Readiness

Institutions exhibited varying levels of preparedness for accreditation. Key gaps included incomplete documentation, absence of robust internal quality processes, underdeveloped policies, and inadequate awareness of accreditation requirements among staff.

8.4. High Demand for Standardised Support Tools

Institutions consistently expressed the need for practical guidance and capacity-building tools. These included standardised templates for reporting and self-assessment, access to benchmarking resources, and more frequent training workshops to enhance understanding of ESHEC's quality assurance standards.

8.5. Offering of Unaccredited Non-Credit Bearing Programmes

Several institutions were found to be delivering programmes that had not undergone formal accreditation processes. These offerings did not meet the ESHEC standards for recognition within the national higher education framework, potentially jeopardising the credibility of qualifications and learner outcomes.



9.
PLANS FOR
THE 2025/2026
FINANCIAL YEAR

PLANS FOR THE 2025/2026 FINANCIAL YEAR

The 2025/2026 financial year will strengthen efforts for a more responsive ESHEC, aligned with the changing needs of industry in terms of relevant skills. Efforts will also be made to ensure that higher education institutions are more responsive and make maximum use of technological advances.

9.1. Development of frameworks for micro-credentials: ESHEC has developed a draft Proposal for funding for the development of a Framework for micro-credentials. The framework will be two-fold, namely: a framework for quality assurance of micro credentials (responsibility will be ESHEC) and a framework for the recognition of micro credentials (responsibility will be the Qualifications Authority). A Country Plan has also been developed following the CEO's attendance at a consultative meeting in Johannesburg. The proposal will be submitted to the Commonwealth of Learning.

9.2. Development of Subject Standards: ESHEC had developed a proposal for Funding for Subject Standards and submitted the Proposal to the EU Delegation in Eswatini. The project is envisaged to begin in June 2025 and will be a six-month project.

9.3. ESHEC will be submitting a proposal to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to develop policy guidelines on Artificial Intelligence in higher education for the integration of AI in teaching and learning. COL has supported other countries like Mauritius in this endeavour.

9.4. The ESHEC integrated System will be expanding to automate HR and other administrative modules, like a stakeholder feedback system for logging complaints and feedback to ESHEC.

9.5. The comprehensive Performance Management System, whose work began in the 2024/2025 financial year, will be concluded in the coming financial year. The system will assist in the organisational and human resource performance.

9.6. The Secretariat looks forward to a Council resolution on the submission of applications for assessment for full registration. Many HEIs are still operating under a provisional which hurts the overall quality of higher education.

9.7. ESHEC will resubmit the Proposal for Government Funding for Public Institutions for the supplementary budget. Public institutions do not have the financial capacity for institutional and programme assessments, and yet this is a requirement for them to meet higher education standards and be aligned with the rest of the world.

9.8. ESHEC will not undertake a national research study in the coming financial year but will focus its efforts on institutional research. The soon-to-be-launched UN/ESHEC and Higher Education Institutions forum will be driven by ESHEC and supported by the UN. ESHEC looks forward to HEIs collaborating on research and also undertaking Tracer Studies. ESHEC will also produce the first State of Higher Education report and will release data to feed into the HEMIS by the end of June 2025. HEIs are already filling in the data collection instrument after being recently oriented on it.

9.9. ESHEC cohosts a Conference in collaboration with the Eswatini Research Association and the Regional conference is planned for November 2025.

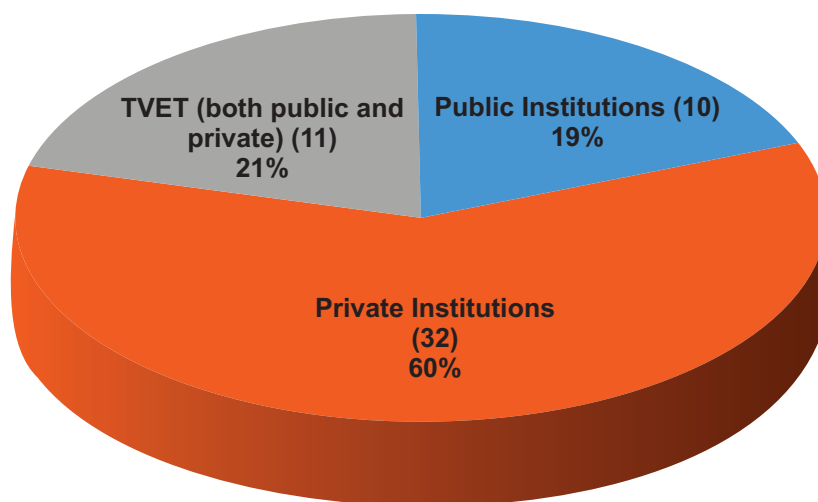


10. APPENDICES

APPENDICES

10.1. BASIC DATA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

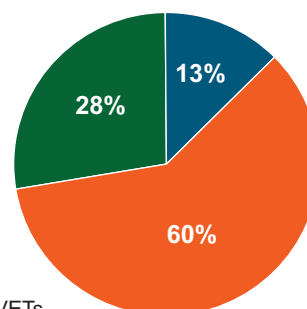
Credible Higher Education Institutions (42)



Public Institutions (10) Private Institutions (32) TVET (both public and private) (11)

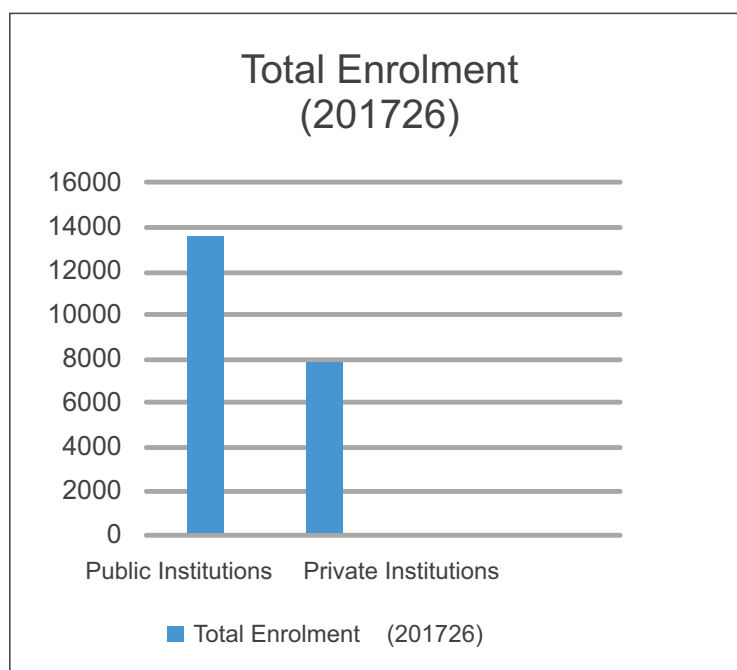
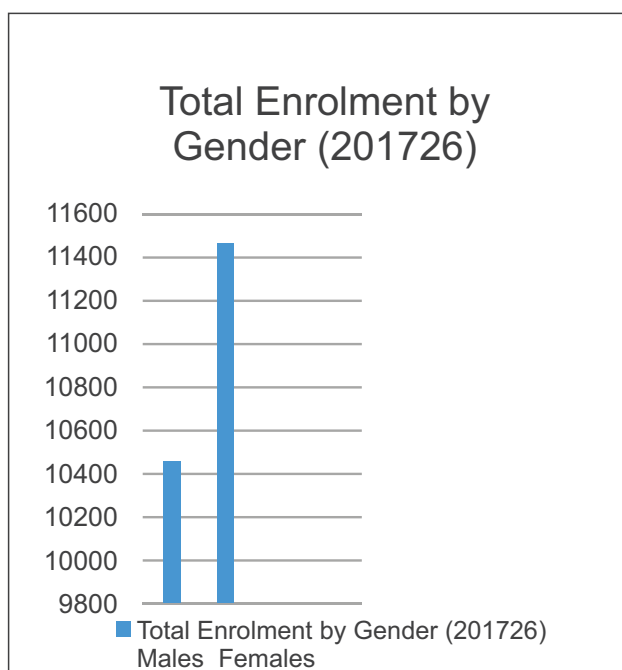
Public Institutions – 10
Private Institutions – 32
TVET (both public and private) – 11

TYPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



Universities Colleges TVETs

Student Enrolment



Total enrolment – 21,726

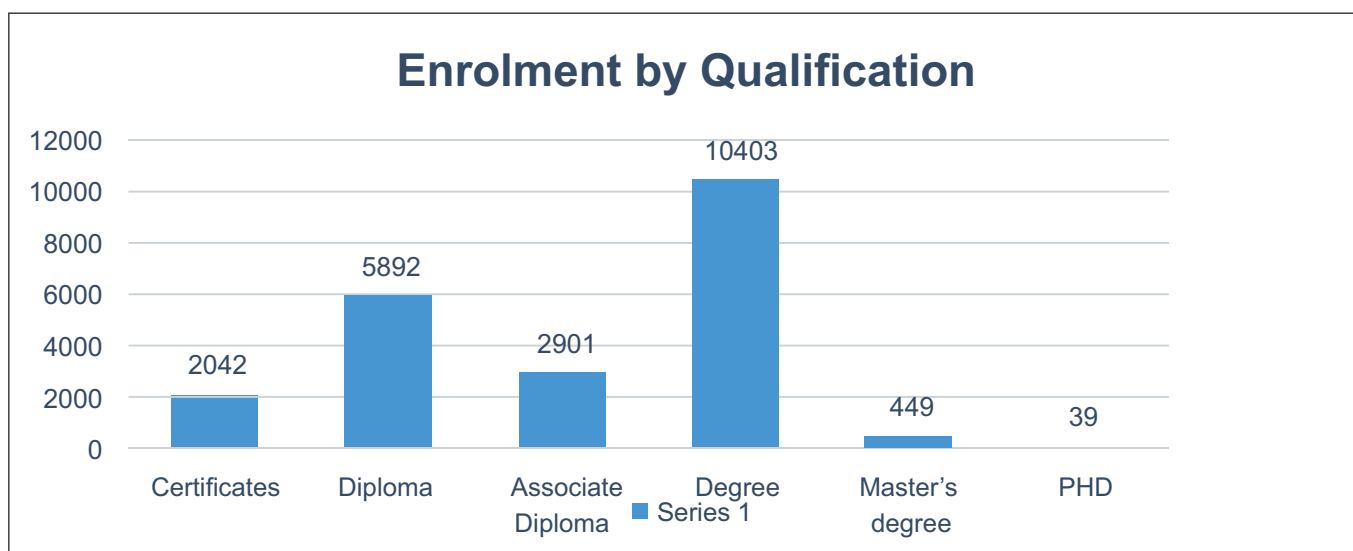
Males – 10 460

Public Institutions – 13 662

Females – 11 266

Private Institutions – 8 064

Enrolment by Qualification



Certificates - 2042

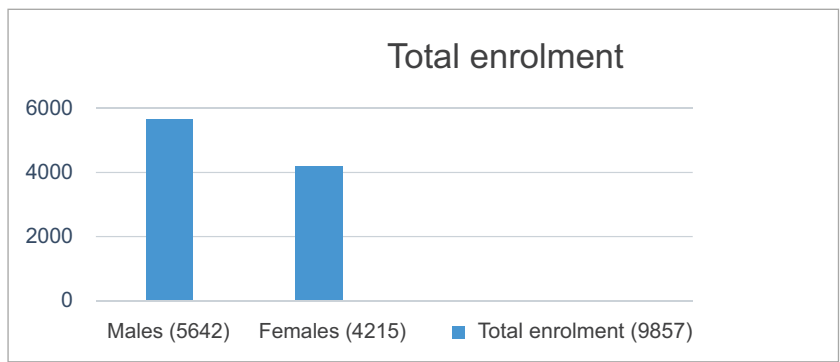
Degree - 10403

Diploma - 5892

Master's degree - 449

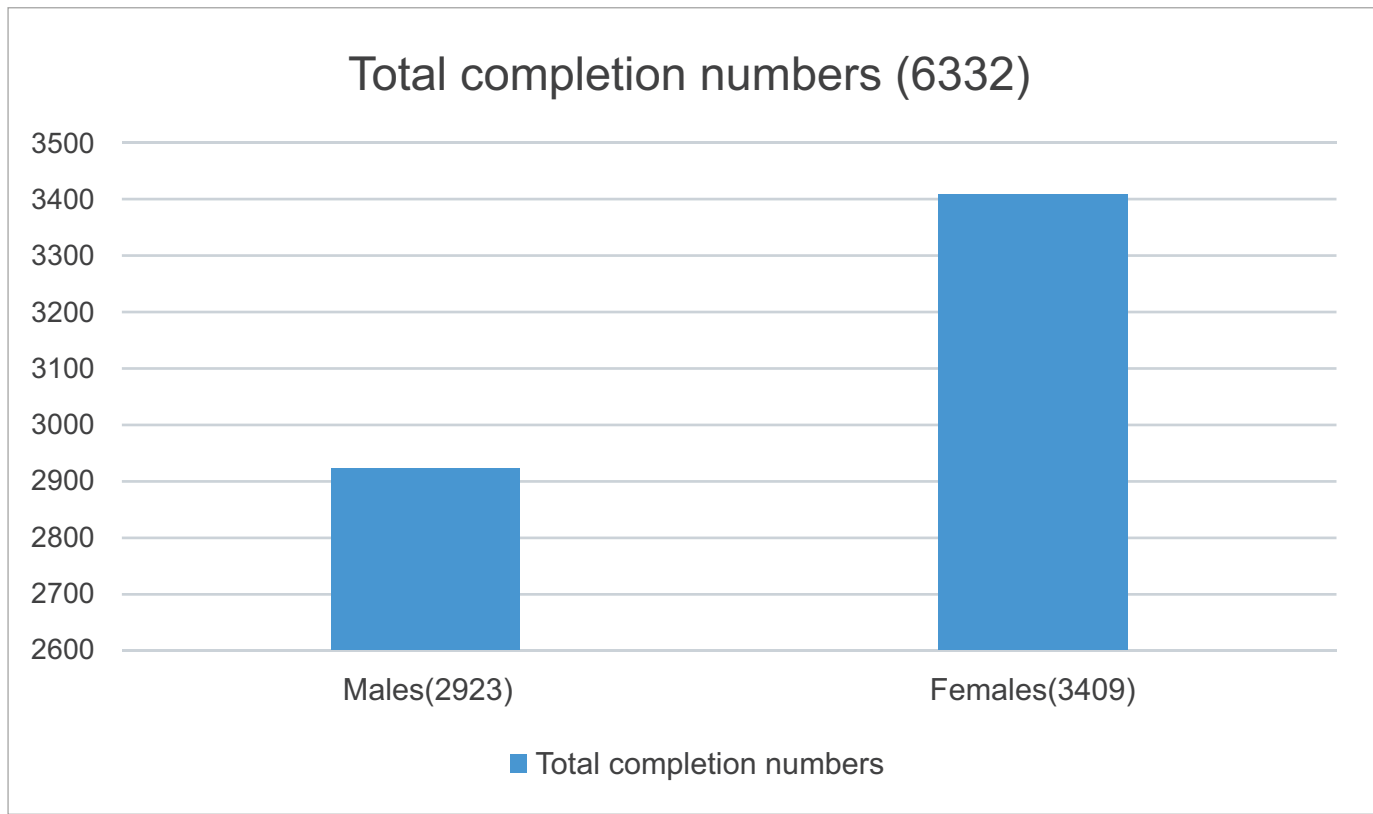
Associate Diploma - 2901

PhD - 39

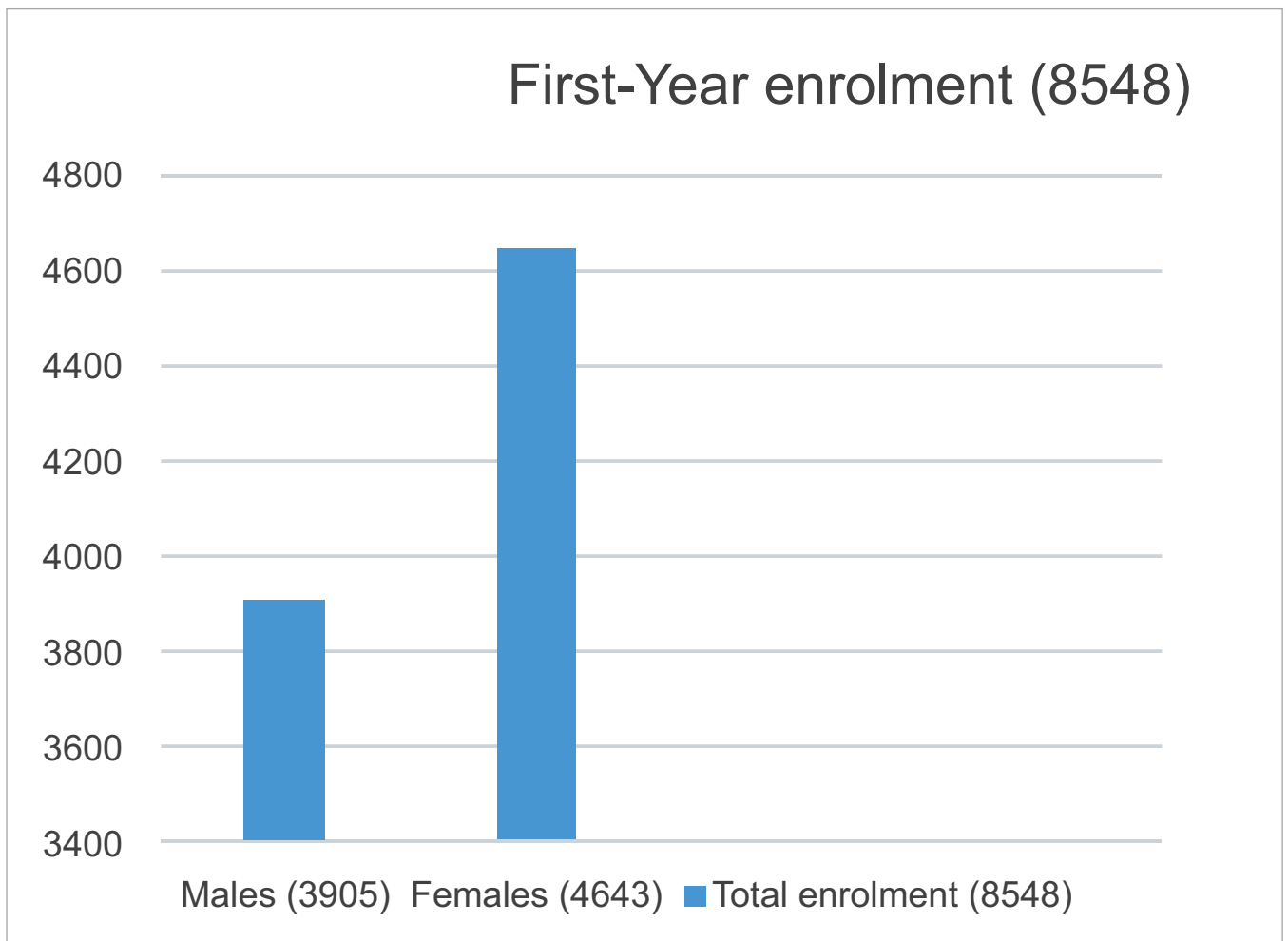


Total Student Enrolment – 9857
Males – 5642
Females – 4215

Student Completion - 2023



Total completion numbers - 6332
Males – 2923
Females – 3409



Total Student Enrolment - 8548

Males – 3905

Females – 4643

International Students – 297

Students with Special Needs – 40

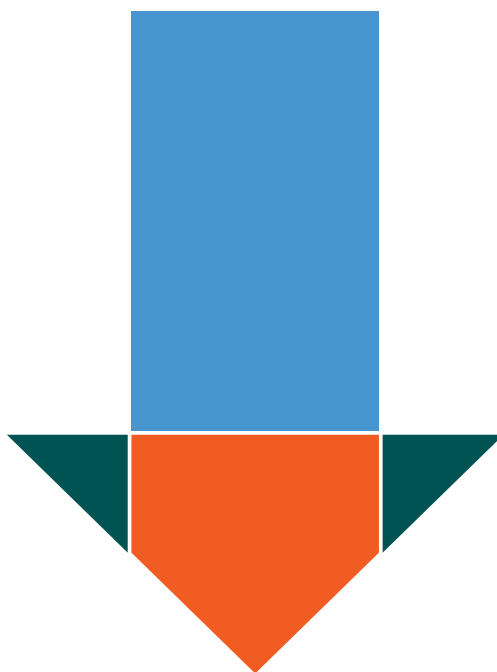
10.2.MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR ESHEC

This framework outlines the comprehensive structure and operational guidelines for the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC). This framework details the processes, criteria, and protocols by which ESHEC executes these vital functions, aiming to enhance the effectiveness, transparency, and consistency of its regulatory activities and thereby contribute to the development of a high-quality, accessible, and sustainable higher education sector aligned with the country's development goals.

10.2.1. Functions

The effectiveness of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework relies heavily on the dedicated human resources within the organisation. ESHEC's staff complement is structured to support various operational functions critical to the successful implementation of M&E activities. The organisation is headed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who provides overall leadership.

- The Finance and Administration team comprises the Manager, IT Officer, Logistics personnel, and the PA to the CEO.
- The Quality Assurance department is staffed by a Manager, a Senior Quality Assurance Officer, and three (3) Quality Assurance Officers.
- The Communications and Advocacy unit consists of one officer, the Communications and Advocacy Officer.
- The Research, Monitoring, and Publications Unit is headed by the Research Manager, who is the sole staff member responsible for this unit.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Registration and Accreditation	% of HEIs with full registration status	Reports	4	4	8	Annually	<i>Target Exceeded</i>
	Number of institutional audits conducted	Reports	8	8	13	Annually	<i>Target Exceeded</i>
	No of virtual assessments	Reports	-	12	4	Annually	Target not met. Progress at 33%
	Number of relevant programmes accredited	Reports	7	25	46	Quarterly	<i>Target Exceeded</i>
	Frequency of internal policy reviews	Revised Guidelines Revised ESHEC Processes	1	1	2	Annual	<i>Target exceeded.</i> Through review of ESHEC guidelines through COL and ESHEC processes with Professor Chireshe.
Compliance Monitoring	No of HEIs with established Internal Quality Assurance Units/focal persons	Reports	8	42	29	Quarterly	Target not met. In progress
	Number of improvement plans implemented	Reports	7	25	32	Monthly	<i>Target Exceeded</i>
	Number of institutions capacitated of conducting tracer studies	Attendance Registers	-	42	42	Annually	Target Attained
	Number of institutions visited	Reports	42	42	42	Annually	Target Attained

QUALITY ASSURANCE							
Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building	Number of QA workshops, training sessions held for HEIs	Workshop reports. Attendance sheets	4	4	8	Bi-annual	Target met. ESHEC had numerous engagements with HEIs
	Coordination meetings		4	4	4	Quarterly	Target met (symposium with industry, launch of National Skills Anticipation Report, 2 research forums)
	No of virtual assessments	Reports	-	12	4	Annually	Target met (symposium with industry, launch of National Skills Anticipation Report, 2 research forums)
	Participation rate of HEIs in QA development initiatives	Attendance Registers	42	42	100%	Quarterly	Target Attained
	Feedback score from stakeholders on QA awareness and support	Reports of surveys conducted	50%	80%	70%	Quarterly	Target not met. Not all participants respond to surveys.
Complaints and Appeals Handling	Number of appeals processed, and outcomes documented	Appeals Letters	-	-	3	Annually	Appeals procedure in progress – set up of customer relations system in progress
Reporting and Documentation	Timeliness and completeness of ESHEC's quarterly and annual reports	Reports	12	12	12	Monthly	Target Met
	Quality of documentation of organisational decisions (meeting minutes, audit reports, etc).	Reports	4	4	4	Annually	Target Met

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Create a Database of Subject Matter Experts	Number of Databases	Data Base	-	1	1	Annual	Target Met

FINANCE

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Financial Systems	Number of policies and procedures approved	Approved Policies	-	-	2 policies	Annual	The Council developed and approved a motor vehicle and cybersecurity policy.
Financial Reporting	Clean, audited financial statements	Audited Financial Statements	-	1	1	Annually	The Council obtained an unqualified audit opinion.
	Implementation of audit findings	Audit findings update reports	-	100%	95%	Quarterly	The audit findings implementation report was submitted to the finance committee.
	Quarterly Reports	Quarterly Reports	4	4	4	Quarterly	All fourth-quarter financial performance reports were submitted to the Council.
Risk Management	Updated Risk Register	Risk register	-	Low risk	Low risk		Risk ratings have been kept low by ensuring that a mitigation plan is in place.

ADMINISTRATION

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Information Technology	% of automation of business processes	Number of automated modules (QA, finance, HEMIS and documentation)	25%	50%	25%	Annually	Target not achieved. Automation has been deferred until process development is complete
Capacity Building	Number of workshops and trainings attended	Number of Capacity Building conducted	-	4	7	Quarterly	The council conducted 6 capacity-building initiatives during the reporting period and one benchmarking trip.
Wellness initiatives	Wellness Initiatives	Wellness reports	-	12	8	Monthly	Wellness initiatives include celebration of birthdays, gym membership, swimming membership, financial literacy, subscription to medical aid, cancer walks, team building, and debriefing sessions

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Increase awareness of ESHEC's mandate and strategy	Number of target stakeholders who are aware of ESHEC's mandate and strategy	Reports	-	1	2	Annually	Target exceeded
Improve the visibility of ESHEC's activities.	Number of media mentions (TV, radio, print, online) per quarter	Report	-	3	9	Monthly	Target exceeded

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Strengthen stakeholder engagement	Number of stakeholder forums or engagement events held	Report	1	2	2	Annually	Target Achieved
Enhance digital communication reach	% increase in social media followers and engagement rates	Report (of likes and followers)	2000	5000	7671	Annually	Target exceeded
Promote policy initiatives and reforms.	Number of policy briefs, newsletters or updates shared with stakeholders	Publications	2	2	2	Annually	Target Achieved
Enhance public trust and reputation	% positive sentiment in public perception surveys		4	4	4	4	Target Achieved
Ensure consistency in ESHEC branding and messaging	% of publications and communications that adhere to ESHEC branding guidelines	Reports	2	2	2	2	Target Achieved
Reporting and Documentation		Reports	12	12	12	Monthly	Target Achieved

RESEARCH, MONITORING AND PUBLICATIONS							
Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Research Output	No of internal research studies	Research Findings and Reports	1	1	3	Annually	Target Exceeded
	No of national studies	Reports	2	1	1	Annually	Target Achieved
Support evidence-based policymaking	No of policy briefs produced based on and influenced by research findings	Reports	0	1	2	Annually	Target Achieved (both awaiting attention and approval of the Council)
Promote knowledge sharing and academic publishing.	No research publications	Research Publications	-	2	3	Annually	Target Exceeded
Monitor institutional compliance and performance	% of compliance visits for higher education institutions	Reports	-	2	3	Annually	Target Exceeded
Evaluate the impact of higher education policies	No of monitoring & evaluation (M&E) assessments conducted	Publication and Research Findings	-	1	2	Annually	Target Exceeded
Improve accessibility of research outputs	% of ESHEC research available online or in public repositories	ESHEC Website	100%	100%	100%	Annually	Target Achieved

RESEARCH, MONITORING AND PUBLICATIONS

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
Build research capacity within ESHEC and institutions	No of capacity-building workshops or training sessions conducted on research	Attendance registers and reports	1	1	2	Annually	Target Exceeded
	Participation rate of HEIs in Research development initiatives	Attendance Registers	-	80%	97%	Annually	Target Exceeded
	Partnerships and collaboration developed as a result of research.	Research MoUs	1	2	3	Annually	Target Exceeded
Core Data Management - Statistics for Higher Education	No of data for higher education institutions	Available data report	1	1	2	Annually	Target Exceeded – data was collected in April and October 2024.
	ISCED Classification	Benchmarking Report, Designed Instrument, Manual, Data Collected, Data Analysed, and Report	-	100%	64% progress	Annually	Target not achieved – data collection in progress – report due in June 2025.
Reporting and Documentation	Performance Reports	Publication and Research Findings	12	12	12	Annually	Target Achieved
Resource Mobilisation	Concept Notes		1	2	4		Target Exceeded
	Proposals for Funding	Developed Proposals for Funding	-	1	3	Annually	National Skills Anticipation Report Subject Standards

RESEARCH, MONITORING AND PUBLICATIONS

Strategic Objective	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Means of Verification	Baseline	Target	Actual	Frequency	Comments
	Funding Received	The National Skills Anticipation Report	-	-	1	Annually	This was a collaborative effort where ESHEC, ESEPARC, and the Taiwan Technical Mission contributed to financing the study. The Taiwan Technical Mission will also cover printing expenses. The Taiwan Technical Mission (ICDF) will also cover printing expenses.

10.3. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION ANNUAL REPORT

This report provides an overview of the activities, outcomes, and impact achieved under the strategic project aimed at enhancing stakeholder collaboration during the period from April 2024 to March 2025, drawing directly from the provided source documents. The goal of this project is to ensure constant collaboration with stakeholders. The table below summarises the key activities, outcomes, and impact of some of these activities.

Activity Area/KPI	Outcome(s)	Impact(s)
Establishing Foundational Elements (Relations Matrix, Stakeholder ID, Database)	ESHEC relations matrix with stakeholders established, ascertaining perceptions, influence, and responsiveness levels. Key stakeholders identified. Stakeholders register (database) compiled with focal persons and contacts; updating is an ongoing exercise.	Managed meaningful stakeholder relationships; Enhanced stakeholder satisfaction.
Conducting Stakeholder Needs/Perception Surveys	At least two surveys were administered to ascertain external stakeholder needs/expectations; data were analysed into reports shared with management. Qualitative data to inform the Stakeholder Management Strategy. Stakeholder perception tool administered to specific faculties (Feb 27, 2025). Perceptions captured via evaluation surveys link after workshops and symposiums..	Existing stakeholder feedback system; Management of meaningful stakeholder relationships; Enhanced stakeholder satisfaction; Improved feedback loops on organisational performance. HEIs perceptions monitored. Continuous monitoring of perceptions planned/ongoing.
Development of Stakeholder Management Strategy	Terms of Reference (TOR) for engaging a consultant drawn (Oct 2024), but implementation shifted to the next financial year due to financial prioritisation. Drafting stalled by financial constraints (Jul-Sept 2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI) is engaged to help with the draft strategy (Nov 2024), which is yet to be presented for approval.	(Impact is linked to the eventual strategy implementation; not explicitly defined from the drafting status within this period in sources.)
Engagement with Business Eswatini (BE)	BE added to stakeholder database (June 2024). Areas of collaboration identified during the first engagement (June 20, 2024). BE meeting pointed out gaps for ESHEC and HEIs to address. Received great buy-in from BE. BE expressed strong support for a proposed symposium. An evaluation questionnaire of BE perception was sent.	Enhanced stakeholder satisfaction; Strong partnerships.

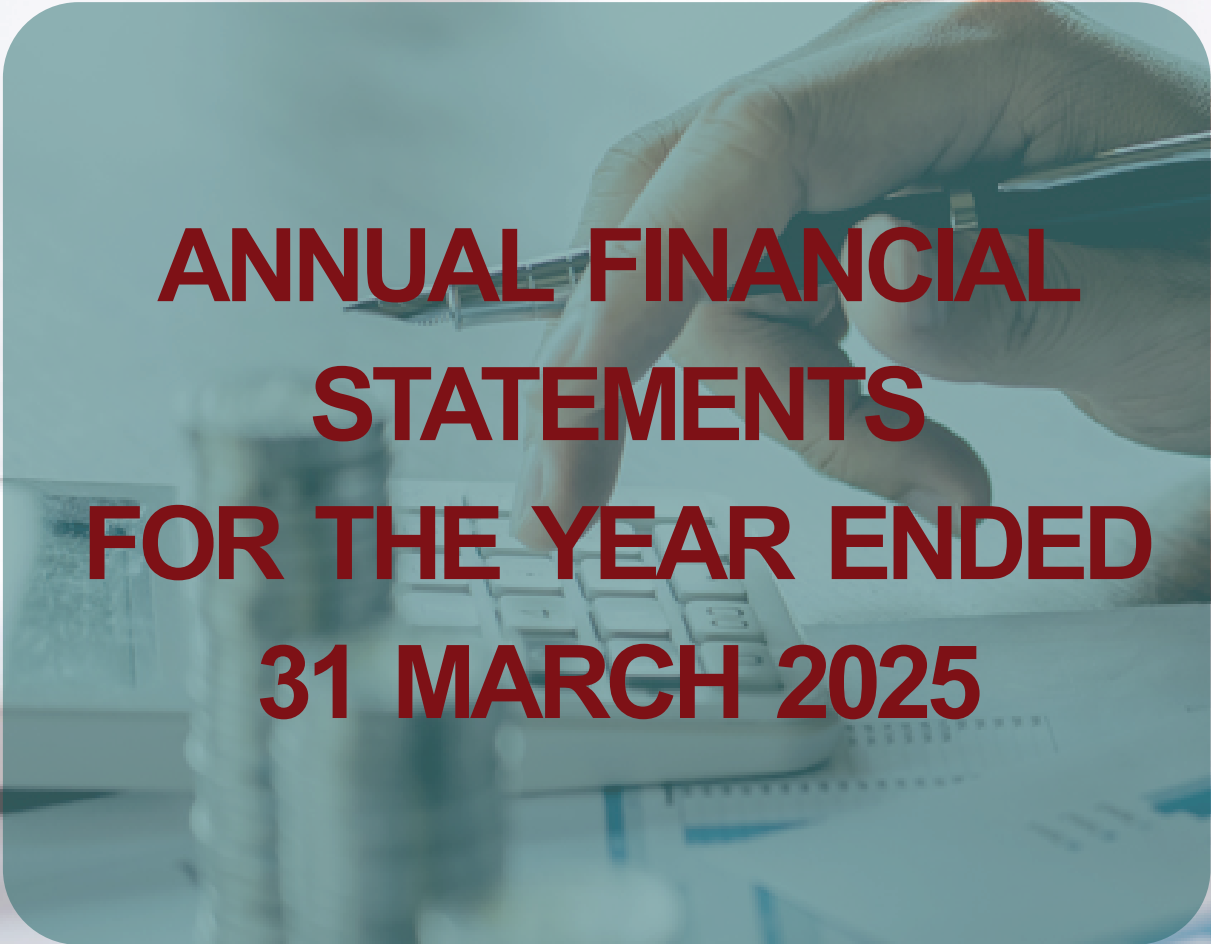
Activity Area/KPI	Outcome(s)	Impact(s)
Collaboration with the Ministry of Labour & Social Security (DIVT)	ESHEC signed an MoU with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, particularly DIVT, to promote vocational education programmes (during Q2 2024). ESHEC collaborated to present its role during the Eswatini Career Fair Exhibition at Nhlengano (June 25, 2024).	Good outreach platform, allowing high school students, teachers, and the public to appreciate ESHEC's mandate for the first time.
Collaboration with the Ministry of Education & Training (MoET)	Continuous close collaboration with MoET. Engaged MoET officials on the use of AI (Nov 14, 2024). Secretariat introduced to the Minister, MoET official, and the new board (Oct 2024). Plan of action/expectations from board orientation received for implementation. Full support was received from the Chief Tertiary Inspector.	Improved communication, Meaningful collaboration, Enhanced stakeholder satisfaction, Continuous improvement of relations, and Strong partnerships. MoET is an indispensable stakeholder.
MoET and ESHEC Symposium (Nov 20-21, 2024)	Fixed date for symposium confirmed with the Chief Tertiary Inspector (Oct 2024). A symposium was held with approximately one hundred participants on each of the two days. Feedback from participants was analysed and reported to management.	Insights provided are invaluable for guiding ESHEC and MoET to deliberately improve higher education in Eswatini. Enhanced stakeholder satisfaction. Continuous improvement of relations with industry players and HEIs.
Engagements with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)	Scheduled an HEI's Coordination Meeting (Q2 2024). Engaged main stakeholders (HEIs) to capacitate them on Programme Development (Sept 17 & 19, 2024). Engaged ECT and Soft-Tech college to assess programmes (Oct 30-31, 2024). Facilitated five key engagements at SANU, Regent Business School, EMCU, UNESWA, and STREEC (Feb 2025). Administered links for perception monitoring.	Strengthen relations. Enhanced stakeholder perception by HEIs. The outcome of assessments is that some proposed programmes advance the strategic goal to accredit emerging, scarce skills, and relevant programmes. Continuous monitoring of HEIs perceptions. Continuous improvement of relations. Sensitisation to produce graduates with relevant/competitive skills.

Activity Area/KPI	Outcome(s)	Impact(s)
Collaboration on Skills & Labour Market Initiatives	Launched the National Labour Market Skills Project (NLMSP) with the Taiwan Technical Mission (ICDF) and ESEPARC (Jul-Sept 2024). Hosted the validation of the National Labour Market TVET Assessment Report with TTM and ESEPARC (Feb 5, 2025). Participated in ITC, public TVET HEIs, and ESERPAC forum (Sept 26, 2024).	Insights from the TTM (ICDF) project will guide institution registration and programme evaluation to align skills with job market needs. Highlighted key insights into the TVET landscape, shaping the future of skills development and workforce readiness. Creation of a rigorous, relevant, and responsive higher education system/industry sectors.
Public Outreach & Information Dissemination	Updated the credible list of registered and accredited programmes (Aug 29 & 30, 2024). Engaged, received, and attended to multiple queries from the public during the 2024 Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) (Aug 30 – Sept 08, 2024).	EITF served as a platform to disseminate information to the public. Enhanced stakeholder perception/satisfaction through engagement. The public appreciated ESHEC's mandate.
Engagement with Quality Assurance (QA) Stakeholders & Programme Validation Processes	Engaged with EQA, a high-influence stakeholder for strategic plan delivery (three meetings during Q2 2024). Administered a stakeholder perception tool after programme report evidence validation meetings (Feb 27, 2025). ESHEC will continuously support programme quality assurance and adherence to accreditation standards. Conducted surveys to ascertain stakeholders' perceptions and recommendations.	Supports ESHEC in delivering its strategic plan. Supports the establishment of a rigorous, relevant, and responsive higher education system/industry sectors. Continuous internal processes and service delivery by staff.

10.3.1.CONCLUSION

From April 2024 to March 2025, ESHEC undertook various activities aimed at enhancing stakeholder collaboration. Key achievements included engaging with critical stakeholders such as Business Eswatini, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, HEIs, and the public through meetings, symposiums, exhibitions, and capacity-building workshops. Efforts continued in identifying stakeholders, compiling a database, conducting perception surveys, and working towards a comprehensive Stakeholder Management Strategy. These activities have contributed to improved communication, meaningful collaboration, and enhanced stakeholder satisfaction, reinforcing existing relationships and building new partnerships, ultimately aiming for a rigorous, relevant, and responsive higher education system in Eswatini

Eswatini Higher Education Council

A hand holding a pen is positioned over a calculator and some financial documents. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a desk with papers and a lamp. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent teal rectangle.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



GENERAL INFORMATION

Country of incorporation and domicile

eSwatini

Nature of business and principal activities

Development and implementation of a system of quality assurance for higher education which includes registration, accreditation, institutional audits, quality promotion and standards development.

Directors

Mr Phiwayinkhosi Ginindza - Council Chairperson
Mr. Fairlie Mabuza - Finance Committee Chairperson
Dr. Ntombenhle Dlamini - ADPC Chairperson
Mr. Mboni Dlamini - Member
Dr. Oliver Museka - Member
Dr. Faith Mngomezulu-Mlotsa - Member
Ms. Talekile Dlamini - Member
Ms. Sifisosethu Bhembe - Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee
Ms. Hlob'sile Ndzimandze - Member
Ms. Nondumiso Shongwe - Member
Ms. Celiwe Khumalo - Member
Dr. Loretta Mkhonta - Chief Executive Officer

Registered office

1st Floor
Lilunga House
Somhlolo Road
Mbabane

Bankers

First National Bank Eswatini Limited
Nedbank Eswatini Limited

Auditors

Kobla Quashie and Associates
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors
Mallya House
Lot 137
Esser Street
Manzini
M200

Index



The reports and statements set out below comprise the annual financial statements presented to the shareholder:

Council Members' Responsibilities and Approval	57
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Statement of Comprehensive Income	62
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The following supplementary information does not form part of the annual financial statements and is unaudited:

Detailed Income Statement	77
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Council Members' Responsibilities and Approval

The council members are required by section 35(1) of the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013, to maintain adequate accounting records and are responsible for the content and integrity of the annual financial statements and related financial information included in this report. It is their responsibility to ensure that the annual financial statements fairly present the state of affairs of the council as at the end of the financial year and the results of its operations and cash flows for the period then ended, in conformity with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities. The external auditors are engaged to express an independent opinion on the annual financial statements.

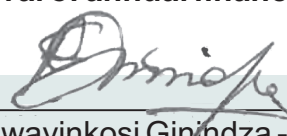
The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and are based upon appropriate accounting policies consistently applied and supported by reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates. The council members acknowledge that they are ultimately responsible for the system of internal financial control established by the entity and place considerable importance on maintaining a strong control environment. To enable themselves to meet these responsibilities, the council sets standards for internal control aimed at reducing the risk of error or loss in a cost effective manner. The standards include the proper delegation of responsibilities within a clearly defined framework, effective accounting procedures and adequate segregation of duties to ensure an acceptable level of risk.

These controls are monitored throughout the council and all employees are required to maintain the highest ethical standards in ensuring the council's business is conducted in a manner that in all reasonable circumstances is above reproach. The focus of risk management in the council is on identifying, assessing, managing and monitoring all known forms of risk across the council. While operating risk cannot be fully eliminated, the council endeavours to minimise it by ensuring that appropriate infrastructure, controls, systems and ethical behaviour are applied and managed within predetermined procedures and constraints.

The council members are of the opinion, based on the information and explanations given by management, that the system of internal control provides reasonable assurance that the financial records may be relied on for the preparation of the annual financial statements. However, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable, and not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss. The council members have reviewed the council's cash flow forecast for the year to 31 March 2026 and, in the light of this review and the current financial position, they are satisfied that the council has or has access to adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The external auditors are responsible for independently auditing and reporting on the council's annual financial statements. The annual financial statements have been examined by the council's external auditors and their report is presented on page 6 - 7. The annual financial statements set out on pages 8 to 23, which have been prepared on the going concern basis, were approved by the council on 30 July 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Approval of annual financial statements


Mr. Phiwayinkosi Ginindza - Council Chairperson
Mr. Fairlie Mabuza - Finance Committee
Chairperson
Dr. Loretta Mkhonta - Chief Executive Officer

Council Members' Report

The council members have pleasure in submitting their report on the annual financial statements of Eswatini Higher Education Council for the year ended 31 March 2025.

1 Nature of business

The Eswatini Higher Education Council is a statutory body established in terms of section 3 of the Higher Education Act of 2013. The Council is responsible for the accreditation, promotion, coordination, and regulation of higher education in the country. Its mandate includes setting academic standards, accrediting institutions and programmes, advising government on higher education policies, and ensuring quality assurance across all higher education institutions in Eswatini.

2 Review of financial results and activities

The annual financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013. The accounting policies have been applied consistently compared to the prior year. Full details of the financial position, results of operations and cash flows of the council are set out in these annual financial statements.

3 Secretary

The council's secretary is Dr Loretta Mkhonta.

4 Council Members

The Council members in office at the date of this report are as follows:

Council Members

Mr. Phiwayinkosi Ginindza - Council Chairperson
Mr. Fairlie Mabuza - Finance Committee Chairperson
Dr. Ntombenhle Dlamini - ADPC Chairperson
Mr. Mboni Dlamini - Member
Dr. Oliver Museka - Member
Dr. Faith Mngomezulu-Mlotsa - Member
Ms. Talekile Dlamini - Member
Ms. Sifisosethu Bhembe - Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee
Ms. Hlob'sile Ndzimandze - Member
Ms. Nondumiso Shongwe - Member
Ms. Celiwe Khumalo - Member
Dr. Loretta Mkhonta - Chief Executive Officer

5 Events after the reporting period

The council members are not aware of any material event which occurred after the reporting date and up to the date of this report.

6 Going concern

The annual financial statements have been prepared on the basis of accounting policies applicable to a going concern. This basis presumes that funds will be available to finance future operations and that the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities, contingent obligations and commitments will occur in the ordinary course of business.

The council members believe that the entity has adequate financial resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future and accordingly the annual financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The council members have satisfied themselves that the entity is in a sound financial position and that it has access to sufficient borrowing facilities to meet its foreseeable cash requirements. The council members are not aware of any new material changes that may adversely impact the entity. The council members are also not aware of any material non-compliance with statutory or regulatory requirements or of any pending changes to legislation which may affect the council.

Independent Auditor's Report

KOBLA QUASHIE AND ASSOCIATES

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS (SD)



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P. O. Box 710, Manzini M200, Eswatini
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E-mail: info@koblaquashie.co.sz
Website: www.koblaquashie.com

To the Member of Eswatini Higher Education Council

Opinion

We have audited the annual financial statements of Eswatini Higher Education Council (the council) set out on pages 8 to 23, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 March 2025; and the statement of comprehensive income; the statement of changes in funds; and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended; and notes to the annual financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the annual financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Eswatini Higher Education Council as at 31 March 2025, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Annual Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the council in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards) (Parts 1, 3 and 4A) (IESBA Code) and other independence requirements applicable to performing audits of financial statements in eSwatini. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IESBA Code and in accordance with other ethical requirements applicable to performing audits in eSwatini. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

The council members are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the document titled "Eswatini Higher Education Council annual financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025", which includes the Council Members' Report as required by the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013 and the supplementary information as set out on page 24. The other information does not include the annual financial statements and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the annual financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the annual financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the annual financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Independent Auditor's Report

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Annual Financial Statements

The council members are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the annual financial statements in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013, and for such internal control as the council members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of annual financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the annual financial statements, the council members are responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the council members either intend to liquidate the council or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Kobla Quashie and Associates
Farai Machakata
Partner
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors

30 July 2025
Mallya House
Lot 137
Esser Street
Manzini
M200

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2025

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2025	2024
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2	1,271,266	1,416,016
Intangible assets	3	916,352	845,124
		2,187,618	2,261,140
Current Assets			
Trade and other receivables	4	2,842,393	2,672,264
Cash and cash equivalents	5	64,389	900,882
		2,906,782	3,573,146
Total Assets		5,094,400	5,834,286
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Capital Reserves	6	790,634	1,182,757
Accumulated Funds		1,357,568	948,076
		2,148,202	2,130,833
Liabilities			
Non-Current Liabilities			
Borrowings	7	222,902	-
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	1,178,061	1,155,968
Borrowings	7	79,392	-
Deferred Income	8	1,465,843	2,547,485
		2,723,296	3,703,453
Total Liabilities		2,946,198	3,703,453
Total Equity and Liabilities		5,094,400	5,834,286

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2025	2024
Revenue	10	14,012,773	14,102,837
Operating expenses		(13,565,105)	(13,725,940)
Operating profit		447,668	376,897
Finance costs	14	(38,176)	-
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		409,492	376,897
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		409,492	376,897

Statement of Changes in Funds

Figures in Emalangeni	Capital Reserves	Accumulated Funds	Total equity
Balance at 1 April 2023	1,495,860	546,298	2,042,158
Surplus for the year	-	376,897	376,897
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	376,897	376,897
Prior year adjustment	-	24,881	24,881
Amortisation of capital reserves	(313,103)	-	(313,103)
Total changes	(313,103)	24,881	(288,222)
Balance at 1 April 2024	1,182,757	948,076	2,130,833
Deficit for the year	-	409,492	409,492
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	409,492	409,492
Amortisation of capital reserves	(392,123)	-	(392,123)
Total changes	(392,123)	-	(392,123)
Balance at 31 March 2025	790,634	1,357,568	2,148,202
Note(s)	6		

Statement of Cash Flows

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2025	2024
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash receipts from customers		12,761,002	11,707,680
Cash paid to suppliers and employees		(13,326,540)	(13,931,609)
Cash used in operations	15	(565,538)	(2,223,929)
Finance costs		(38,176)	-
Net cash from operating activities		(603,714)	(2,223,929)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	2	(508,579)	(247,855)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	2	44,734	-
Purchase of intangible assets	3	(71,228)	(284,912)
Net cash from investing activities		(535,073)	(532,767)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Cash repayments on finance lease liabilities		302,294	-
Movement in deferred income		-	888,871
Net cash from financing activities		302,294	888,871
Total cash movement for the year		(836,493)	(1,867,825)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		900,882	2,768,707
Total cash at end of the year		5 64,389	900,882

Accounting Policies

1. Basis of preparation and summary of significant accounting policies

The annual financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities, and the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013. The annual financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, and incorporate the principal accounting policies set out below. They are presented in Emalangenani.

These accounting policies are consistent with the previous period.

1.1 Significant judgements and sources of estimation uncertainty

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

Useful lives of property, plant and equipment

The determination of depreciation expense involves significant estimates and assumptions by management. Property, plant and equipment are depreciated over their estimated useful lives, which are based on historical experience, technical assessments and anticipated usage patterns. The residual values and depreciation methods are also based on management's judgement and are reviewed annually for appropriateness:

Impairment on trade receivables

The Council assesses trade receivables for impairment when objective evidence of credit loss exists. Indicators include significant financial difficulty of the debtor, breach of contract, or adverse changes in the debtor's operating environment. When such evidence is identified, the Council estimates the present value of expected future cash flows, discounted at the original effective interest rate. This assessment involves significant judgement, particularly in estimating the amount and timing of expected recoveries and evaluating the financial position of the debtor.

Revenue from certificate/ program accreditation

When institutions apply for programme or certificate accreditation, they are required to submit projections of tuition fees and anticipated enrolment figures. The Council uses these projections to estimate the revenue expected from the programme and calculates an accreditation fee equal to 7.2% of the projected revenue. This invoiced fee is not subject to adjustment once billed, regardless of the actual enrolment or tuition levels achieved. The use of forward-looking data at the initial measurement date introduces estimation and measurement uncertainty, as actual results may differ significantly from the assumptions applied. However, such differences do not result in adjustments to the invoiced amount, and any estimation variance is not corrected in subsequent periods..

Revenue from subscriptions

The Council recognises revenue from subscriptions at a rate of 0.04% of the total revenue of registered higher education institutions, as prescribed by the Higher Education Act, 2013. In instances where institutions have not submitted their audited financial statements, the Council estimates the subscription amount using internal data sourced from its Research Department. Significant management judgement is also applied in determining reasonable assumptions around tuition rates and enrolment trends. Actual results may differ from these estimates, and any such differences are accounted for in the period in which the audited information becomes available.

Accounting Policies

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment are tangible assets which the council holds for its own use or for rental to others and which are expected to be used for more than one period. An item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the council, and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

Property, plant and equipment is initially measured at cost. Cost includes costs incurred initially to acquire or construct an item of property, plant and equipment and costs incurred subsequently to add to, replace part of, or service it. If a replacement cost is recognised in the carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment, the carrying amount of the replaced part is derecognised.

The initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing an asset and restoring the site on which it is located is also included in the cost of property, plant and equipment, when such dismantling, removal and restoration is obligatory.

Expenditure incurred subsequently for major services, additions to or replacements of parts of property, plant and equipment are capitalised if it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the expenditure will flow to the council and the cost can be measured reliably. Day to day servicing costs are included in profit or loss in the period in which they are incurred.

Major inspection costs which are a condition of continuing use of an item of property, plant and equipment and which meet the recognition criteria are included as a replacement in the cost of the item of property, plant and equipment. Any remaining inspection costs from the previous inspection is derecognised.

Major spare parts and stand by equipment which are expected to be used for more than one period are included in property, plant and equipment.

Property, plant and equipment is subsequently stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation of an asset commences when the asset is available for use as intended by management. Depreciation is charged to write off the asset's carrying amount over its estimated useful life to its estimated residual value, using a method that best reflects the pattern in which the asset's economic benefits are consumed by the council.

Leased assets are depreciated in a consistent manner over the shorter of their expected useful lives and the lease term.

The useful lives of items of property, plant and equipment have been assessed as follows:

Item	Depreciation method	Average useful life
Office Furniture and Fittings	Straight line	10 years
Motor vehicles	Straight line	5 years
IT equipment	Straight line	5 years

When indicators are present that the useful lives and residual values of items of property, plant and equipment have changed since the most recent annual reporting date, they are reassessed. Any changes are accounted for prospectively as a change in accounting estimate.

Impairment tests are performed on property, plant and equipment when there is an indicator that they may be impaired. When the carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment is assessed to be higher than the estimated recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised immediately in profit or loss to bring the carrying amount in line with the recoverable amount.

Accounting Policies

expected from its continued use or disposal. Any gain or loss arising from the derecognition of an item of property, plant and equipment, determined as the difference between the net disposal proceeds, if any, and the carrying amount of the item, is included in profit or loss when the item is derecognised.

1.3 Intangible assets

An intangible asset is an identifiable non-monetary asset without physical substance. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and subsequently at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

1.3 Intangible assets (continued)

Research and development costs are recognised as an expense in the period incurred.

1.4 Financial instruments

Initial measurement

Financial instruments are initially measured at the transaction price (including transaction costs except in the initial measurement of financial assets and liabilities that are measured at fair value through profit or loss) unless the arrangement constitutes, in effect, a financing transaction in which case it is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Financial instruments at amortised cost

These include loans, trade receivables and trade payables. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Debt instruments which are classified as current assets or current liabilities are measured at the undiscounted amount of the cash expected to be received or paid, unless the arrangement effectively constitutes a financing transaction.

At each reporting date, the carrying amounts of assets held in this category are reviewed to determine whether there is any objective evidence of impairment. If there is objective evidence, the recoverable amount is estimated and compared with the carrying amount. If the estimated recoverable amount is lower, the carrying amount is reduced to its estimated recoverable amount, and an impairment loss is recognised immediately in profit or loss.

1.5 Tax

The council is exempt from normal tax.

1.6 Leases

A lease is classified as a finance lease if it transfers substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership to the lessee. All other leases are operating leases.

Finance leases – lessee

Finance leases are recognised as assets and liabilities at amounts equal to the fair value of the leased property or, if lower, the present value of the minimum lease payments.

The lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding liability using the effective interest method.

Operating leases – lessee

Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term unless:

- another systematic basis is representative of the time pattern of the benefit from the leased asset, even if the payments are not on that basis, or
- the payments are structured to increase in line with expected general inflation (based on published indexes or statistics) to compensate for the lessor's expected inflationary cost increases.

Accounting Policies

Any contingent rents are expensed in the period they are incurred.

1.7 Impairment of assets

The council assesses at each reporting date whether there is any indication that property, plant and equipment or intangible assets or goodwill or investment property on the cost model may be impaired. If there is any such indication, the recoverable amount of any affected asset (or group of related assets) is estimated and compared with its carrying amount. If the estimated recoverable amount is lower, the carrying amount is reduced to its estimated recoverable amount, and an impairment loss is recognised immediately in profit or loss.

1.7 Impairment of assets

If an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset (or group of related assets) is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but not in excess of the amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset (or group of assets) in prior years. A reversal of impairment is recognised immediately in profit or loss.

1.8 Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits

The cost of short-term employee benefits, (those payable within 12 months after the service is rendered, such as leave pay and sick leave, bonuses, and non-monetary benefits such as medical care), are recognised in the period in which the service is rendered and are not discounted.

Defined contribution plans

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit plans are charged as an expense as they fall due.

Termination benefits

Termination benefits are recognised as an expense with its resulting liability when the entity is demonstrably committed either:

- to terminate the employment of an employee or group of employees before the normal retirement date;
- or
- to provide termination benefits as a result of an offer made in order to encourage voluntary redundancy.

The termination benefits are measured at the best estimate of the expenditure that would be required to settle the obligation at the reporting date.

1.9 Provisions and contingencies

Provisions are recognised when the council has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event; it is probable that the council will be required to transfer economic benefits in settlement; and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Provisions are measured at the present value of the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation using a pre-tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the obligation. The increase in the provision due to the passage of time is recognised as interest expense.

Provisions are not recognised for future operating losses.

Accounting Policies

1.10 Government grants

Grants that do not impose specified future performance conditions are recognised in income when the grant proceeds are receivable.

Grants that impose specified future performance conditions are recognised in income only when the performance conditions are met.

Grants received before the revenue recognition criteria are satisfied are recognised as a liability. Grants are measured at the fair value of the asset received or receivable.

1.11 Revenue

Revenue from services (accreditation, application/verification fees, subscriptions) is recognised based on the stage of completion of the transaction at the reporting date, determined by surveys of work performed. Accreditation and application/verification fees are recognised at a point in time when the performance obligation is satisfied (e.g., upon granting accreditation or completing verification). Subscription revenue is recognised over time, reflecting the continuous provision of regulatory services. When the outcome of a transaction cannot be estimated reliably, revenue is recognised only to the extent of recoverable expenses. Variable consideration, such as subscription estimates, is constrained to amounts where significant reversal is not highly probable. .

1.12 Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

1.13 Deferred Income

Deferred income represents funds which have been received from government and set aside for the Council's operations. These are transferred into the statement of profit or loss over the period necessary to match them with the related costs that they are intended to compensate.

Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni

2025

2024

2. Property, plant and equipment

	2025			2024		
	Cost or revaluation	Accumulated depreciation and impairment	Carrying value	Cost or revaluation	Accumulated depreciation and impairment	Carrying value
Furniture and fixtures	760,006	(258,829)	501,177	807,369	(269,151)	538,218
Motor vehicles	1,403,664	(926,543)	477,121	1,007,875	(666,775)	341,100
Computer equipment	475,075	(182,107)	292,968	836,842	(300,144)	536,698
Total	2,638,745	(1,367,479)	1,271,266	2,652,086	(1,236,070)	1,416,016

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment - 2025

	Opening balance	Additions	Disposals	Depreciation	Closing balance
Furniture and fixtures	538,218	88,550	(70,055)	(55,536)	501,177
Motor vehicles	341,100	395,789	-	(259,768)	477,121
Computer equipment	536,698	24,240	(191,151)	(76,819)	292,968
	1,416,016	508,579	(261,206)	(392,123)	1,271,266

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment - 2024

	Opening balance	Additions	Depreciation	Closing balance
Furniture and fixtures	590,389	-	(52,171)	538,218
Motor vehicles	541,500	-	(200,400)	341,100
Computer equipment	363,971	247,855	(75,128)	536,698
	1,495,860	247,855	(327,699)	1,416,016

3. Intangible assets

	2025			2024		
	Cost	Accumulated amortisation and impairment	Carrying value	Cost	Accumulated amortisation and impairment	Carrying value
Online registration and accreditation system	916,352	-	916,352	845,124	-	845,124

Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni 2025 2024

3. Intangible assets (continued)

Reconciliation of intangible assets - 2025

	Opening balance	Additions	Closing balance
Online Registration and accreditation system	845,124	71,228	916,352

Reconciliation of intangible assets - 2024

	Opening balance	Additions	Closing balance
Online registration and accreditation system	560,212	284,912	845,124

4. Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables	2,787,513	2,569,870
Sundry Debtors	31,700	75,974
Staff Debtors	23,180	26,420
	2,842,393	2,672,264

5. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents consist of:

Bank balances	64,389	900,882
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6. Capital Reserves

Opening balance	1,182,757	1,495,860
Amortisation of capital reserves	(392,123)	(313,103)
	790,634	1,182,757

Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni	2025	2024
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7. Borrowings

Minimum lease payments which fall due

- within one year	115,442	-
- in second to fifth year inclusive	259,744	-
	375,186	-
Less: future finance charges	(72,892)	-
Present value of minimum lease payments	302,294	-

Net borrowings

Non-current liabilities	222,902	-
Current liabilities	79,392	-
	302,294	-

Following approval of the annual budget and the passing of the budget estimates for 2024/2025 by parliament, the council approved acquisition of a 2024 demo Toyota Corolla Quest 1.8 prestige CVT (B28) through a finance lease arrangement with Nedbank Eswatini Limited. The average lease term is 4 years and the average effective borrowing rate is 13.25% per annum. Interest rates are linked to prime at the contract date. All leases have fixed repayments and no arrangements have been entered into for renewal clauses, purchase options, escalation clauses, contingent rent or subleases. The council's obligations under the finance lease are secured by the leased assets. Refer note .

8. Deferred Income

Deferred Income	1,465,843	2,547,485
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Net deferred income

Current liabilities	1,465,843	2,547,485
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Reconciliation

Opening balance	2,547,485	1,658,614
Subvention received	11,193,608	10,216,000
assessments not yet completed	456,840	-
Funds Utilised	(12,732,090)	(9,327,129)
	1,465,843	2,547,485

9. Trade and other payables

Trade payables	634,807	914,213
Provision for future salary expenses	98,720	95,253
Prepayments	199,510	2,000
Upfront deposits	14,375	19,625
PEU Subscription Accrual	230,649	124,877
	1,178,061	1,155,968

Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni	2025	2024
10. Revenue		
Certificate/Programme Accreditation	617,998	4,337,013
Government subvention	12,731,960	9,327,129
Application & registration fees	5,000	19,000
Subscriptions	248,323	42,798
Amortisation of capital reserves	392,123	313,103
Other revenue	17,369	63,794
	14,012,773	14,102,837
11. Auditor's remuneration		
Fees	79,091	65,500
12. Employee cost		
Employee costs		
Basic	6,093,722	5,102,180
13. Depreciation, amortisation and impairments		
The following items are included within depreciation, amortisation and impairments:		
Depreciation		
Property, plant and equipment	392,123	327,699
14. Finance costs		
Finance leases	38,176	-
15. Cash used in operations		
Net profit before taxation	409,492	376,899
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation, amortisation, impairments and reversals of impairments	392,123	327,699
Loss on sale of assets and liabilities	216,472	-
Prior year adjustments	(392,123)	24,881
Finance costs	38,176	-
Changes in working capital:		
(Increase) decrease in trade and other receivables	(170,129)	(2,395,157)
Increase (decrease) in trade and other payables	22,093	(245,146)
Increase (decrease) in deferred income	(1,081,642)	-
	(565,538)	(1,910,824)

16. Comparative figures

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified.

Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni	2025	2024
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17. Categories of financial instruments

Debt instruments at amortised cost

Cash and cash equivalents	64,389	900,882
Trade and other receivables	2,842,393	2,672,264
	2,906,782	3,573,146

Financial liabilities at amortised cost

Trade and other payables	1,178,059	1,155,968
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Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni	2025	2024
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18. Risk Management

Financial risk factors

The council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks: credit risk, liquidity risk, currency risk, and cash flow interest rate risk. The council's overall risk management program focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimize potential adverse effects on the financial performance of the council. Risk management is carried out under policies approved by the council members. The finance department identifies and evaluates financial risks in cooperation with the council's operating units. The council provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as foreign exchange risk, interest rate risk, and credit risk. The council does not engage in hedging activities using derivative financial instruments.

Market Risk

Market risk includes currency risk, interest rate risk, and equity price risk.

(i) Currency Risk

The council is exposed to currency risk due to payments made to foreign Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), international travel by management and staff, and payments to professional bodies such as the African Quality Assurance Network (AFRIQAN). These transactions often involve foreign currencies, primarily US dollars and South African Rand, as some contracts cannot be negotiated in Emalangeni due to the international nature of the counterparties. Currency risk arises from fluctuations in exchange rates, which may impact the cost of these payments. The council monitors exchange rate movements to manage this risk but does not engage in hedging activities.

(ii) Interest Rate Risk

The council's income and operating cash flows are substantially independent of changes in market interest rates. The council primarily borrows at variable rates, with its exposure to interest rate risk reflected in its finance lease liability of E302,294 (2024: E222,902) at an effective borrowing rate of 13.25% per annum. A sensitivity analysis was performed to assess the impact of potential interest rate changes. A 50 basis point increase in interest rates would increase finance costs by approximately E1,511 (2024: E1,115) annually, while a 50 basis point decrease would reduce finance costs by a similar amount, assuming all other variables remain constant.

(iii) Legal Risk

Legal risk arises from potential legal proceedings or contractual disputes that could result in financial or reputational loss. During the year, Springfield Research University filed an objection to an unfavorable assessment outcome by the council. Additionally, one employee initiated a legal objection following a disciplinary action. The council mitigates legal risk by engaging legal counsel to review significant contracts and ensure compliance with the Eswatini Higher Education Act of 2013 and other relevant regulations. Provisions are made for identified legal obligations based on the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle such obligations at the reporting date.

(iv) Operational Risk

Operational risk is the risk of direct or indirect loss resulting from inadequate or failed internal processes, people, and systems or from external events. The council, appointed by the Minister in terms of the Public Enterprises (Control and Monitoring) Act, closely monitors the strategic direction and operational performance of the entity. To mitigate operational risk, the council maintains a robust system of internal controls, including segregation of duties to ensure the completeness, accuracy, and validity of all transactions.

Notes to the Annual Financial Statements

Figures in Emalangeni	2025	2024
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These controls are supported by management and executive reviews, electronic and manual checks, backup facilities, and contingency planning. The council also invests in competitive recruitment packages, staff training, and team-building activities, often facilitated by external consultants, to enhance employee performance and organizational resilience.

(v) Liquidity Risk

Prudent liquidity risk management involves maintaining sufficient cash and cash equivalents, securing adequate committed credit facilities, and ensuring the ability to meet short-term obligations. The council's cash and cash equivalents decreased to E64,389 (2024: E900,882) at the reporting date, reflecting significant cash outflows from operating and investing activities. Liquidity risk primarily arises from delays in the receipt of monthly government subventions from the Ministry of Finance, which can impact the council's ability to meet immediate financial obligations. To mitigate this, the council maintains an overdraft facility with Nebank Eswatini Limited. The council remains confident that its available cash resources, government subventions (E11,193,608 in 2025), and access to borrowing facilities will be sufficient to meet its funding requirements for the foreseeable future. Regular cash flow

18. Risk Management (continued)

forecasts are conducted to monitor liquidity needs.

(vi) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from cash and cash equivalents, deposits with banks, and outstanding receivables from higher education institutions (HEIs). The council's maximum exposure to credit risk is represented by the carrying amount of trade and other receivables, amounting to E2,886,667 (2024: E2,672,264). As the regulator, the council mandates that all HEIs pay subscriptions, and it has the authority to withhold annual certificate renewals for non-payment. Cash is held with reputable financial institutions, including First National Bank Eswatini Limited and Nedbank Eswatini Limited, to minimize the risk of default.

Detailed Income Statement

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2025	2024
Revenue			
Certificate & Programme fees		617,998	4,337,013
Government Subvention		12,731,960	9,327,129
Application & Verification Fees		5,000	19,000
Subscriptions		248,323	42,798
Amortisation of Capital Reserves		392,123	313,103
Other revenue		17,369	63,794
	10	14,012,773	14,102,837
Operating expenses			
Advertising		518,388	599,903
Staff Training		45,154	124,086
Auditors remuneration	11	79,091	65,500
Council Allowances		715,621	528,990
Bank charges		54,363	40,246
Regulatory tender fees		-	21,977
Computer Expenses		183,844	202,760
Depreciation, amortisation and impairments		392,123	327,699
Discount allowed		-	19,939
Employee costs		6,093,722	5,102,180
Non-recoverable funds		-	39,995
Quality Assurance Program Expenses		814,643	2,989,539
Implementation of NQF		57,699	314,159
Quality Management Expenses		960,249	68,928
IT System Administration Expenses		-	110,139
Consulting Fees		317,025	583,550
Research & Skills Development		860,073	686,165
Staff Welfare		195,168	188,441
Motor Vehicle Expenses		107,500	97,051
Lease rentals on operating lease		567,738	524,815
Legal expenses		395,481	331,513
Loss on sale of assets and liabilities		216,472	-
Insurance		110,037	98,453
Trainee Program		-	55,000
Board Meeting expenses		257,955	167,099
Printing and stationery		62,378	76,047
Repairs and maintenance		20,367	6,190
Capacity Development		24,300	-
Subscriptions		205,445	181,296
Telephone and fax		126,770	105,673
Travel - local		183,499	68,607
		13,565,105	13,725,940
Operating Surplus		447,668	376,897
Finance costs	14	(38,176)	-
Operating Surplus		409,492	376,897

The supplementary information presented does not form part of the annual financial statements and is unaudited



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